

AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT.



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AN
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OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT;
INTENDED AS AN
INTRODUCTION
TO
The STUDY of the SCRIPTURES,
BY
Pointing out the LEADING SENSE, and CONNECTION
OF THE
SACRED WRITERS.

SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By WILLIAM GILPIN, A. M.

PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY,

AND

VICAR OF BOLDRE, IN NEW FOREST, NEAR LYMINGTON.

VOL. II.

LONDON;

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OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION

TO
The Study of the Scriptures



Having out the LEADING PRINCIPLES OF THE

SACRED WRITINGS

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IN TWO VOLUMES

By WILLIAM GILPIN, A.M.

PROFESSOR OF SACRILEGAL

AND

OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

VOL. I.

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MDCCLXXXIII

P R E F A C E

TO THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

WE have seen, in the gospels, an account of the life, and death of our blessed Saviour. The Acts of the Apostles, on which we now enter, give us an account of the progress of Christianity after his ascension.

This history is supposed to have been written by St. Luke; for which supposition we have every evidence, which a point, not absolutely certain, can possess. It bears the marks of his pen; and all the writers of antiquity mention it as his; Clemens, Polycarp, Irenæus, Origen, and Eusebius*.

To this history it hath been objected, that it does not answer its title. It is called the *Acts of the Apostles*: but it gives us only the history of *one* of them; and that not complete.—In a good degree this is true: but in the first place, it does not appear, that this was its original title. It is rather probable, that it was of later date; and that as the gospels contained the *Acts of Christ*,

* See Dr. Whitby's preface to the Acts of the Apostles.

this book in contrast, was inscribed the *Acts of the Apostles*.
—But the title is of little moment: it is enough, if the history gives us all the knowledge on the subject we want.

Now the great point, which seemed wanting in the history of the gospel, was it's connection with the Gentiles. The evangelists had given us the history of our blessed Lord; and his opening the gospel to the Jews. But it would have been too great a chasm in the sacred story, if after all the prophecies in favour of the Gentiles, we had been indebted to prophane history alone for our accounts of their conversion. As St. Paul therefore was the great apostle of the Gentiles, the history of his life was the history also of this great revolution in the church. So far therefore seems true, that the history, which we call the *Acts of the Apostles*, might more properly have been inscribed, *The history of the conversion of the Gentiles*.

But besides the very interesting light, in which this record appears, as a valuable piece of church-history; there is another, in which it must recommend itself to all Christians; and that is, as a very strong proof of the truth of the Christian religion. Our Saviour chose his disciples from the lowest stations of life: he chose such instruments, as were the least likely, on worldly principles, to compleat his designs. During his life-time, they followed their master indeed; but they followed him with supine hearts. They were impressed neither by the sublimity of his instructions, nor by the force of his example. Innocence of life was all they could pretend to. Nor wholly to this; for jealousies, and worldly prejudices of different kinds had strong possession of them. They had no idea of the great work of redemption; but a quick sense of temporal grandeur. When Jesus instructed

instructed them in some noble theme, their thoughts were generally occupied on some worldly meditation: and with a simplicity bordering on weakness, they mistook every thing their master said.—The free-thinker displays his wit on these frequent mistakes of the disciples; and thinks they might at least have been concealed, for the honour of *the early propagators of the gospel*. We think otherwise. We think the behaviour of the disciples was the natural behaviour of men of their character; and the recording of such behaviour was no more, than was justly to be expected from honest men, who were concerned for every thing, that concerned the truth; which this eminently did. Such instruments were plainly unequal to the work of propagating a new religion; and their weaknesses were recorded by themselves, to shew they did not pretend to be equal to it. If they had concealed their weaknesses, they would so far have lessened the evidences of the gospel.

Let us now see the behaviour of these same men, as exhibited in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Those worldly ideas, which had before taken such possession of their hearts, were now totally renounced. They no longer contended, which of them should be the greatest. True Christian humility, a total indifference to the things of this world, and a serene, heavenly-mindedness, became the distinguished parts of their several characters. Instead of that gross ignorance, that constant mistaking of their master's instructions; their minds were suddenly illumined; they saw clearly the truth; they had just conceptions of the whole scheme of redemption; and an amazing power in impressing the doctrines of it on the minds of others. Fears, and apprehensions no longer threw difficulties in their way: no efforts of their enemies; not even death

itself in all it's terrors, could affright them from their duty.

When therefore we see these same men represented under these different characters; and almost instantly changed from one character into the other, what are we to think? How can we account for it? Or how can it rationally be accounted for, unless by supposing they acted under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which their Master had promised to send them after his ascension?—Among the strong evidences therefore in proof of the Christian religion, this certainly deserves a very distinguished place.

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ACTS of the APOSTLES.

WHAT I have already written, Theophilus, contains an account of the life, and doctrine of Jesus Christ, till the time of his ascension; including the forty days, he continued with his disciples, from his resurrection; in which he gave them infallible proofs of the reality of that event. At that time also he instructed them not to leave Jerusalem, till they should receive the Holy Ghost; reminding them, of what they had heard him say, that John baptized only with water; but that he should baptize them with the Holy Spirit of God.

So little however did they, at that time, understand these things, that after the great event of his resurrection,

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3. 4.

5.

6.

1. *To begin to do a thing*, has been shewn by many good critics to be a Greek idiom for *doing it*.

6. Dr. Clarke rather supposes, that the disciples were not quite so gross in their ideas, as to expect a mere *temporal kingdom*; but rather that *great restoration*, which it was supposed the Messiah would effect. — Be it, as it will, it was a *curious* question, and could administer no instruction to them; tho the relation of the case is very instructive to us. *It is not for you*, said our Saviour, *to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath reserved in*

7. 8. resurrection, they asked him, Whether he then meant to restore the kingdom of Israel to it's ancient glory?—Jesus told them, it was not for them to inquire into the times, and seasons of things, which the Father reserved in his own power. They had concern only with what related to themselves; and the great errand, on which they were sent. They should propagate the gospel, and confirm the truth of it, both among the Jews, and Gentiles; and should be endowed with sufficient power to this purpose, through the influence of the Holy Ghost.
9. This was one of the last discourses, which Jesus held with his disciples. Soon afterwards he was taken from them; and in their sight ascended into
10. heaven.—As they stood eagerly gazing after him; it pleased God to quiet their anxiety; by sending two angels to them; who appearing in a luminous form,
11. said, You disciples of Jesus, why stand you here, expecting his return? He will return; but not till that time, when he shall come to judge the world.
12. 13. 14. —These things were done on the mount of Olives, from whence the apostles returning to Jerusalem, assembled, in acts of devotion, with the mother of Jesus, and others of his followers.

15. At one of these meetings, when about one hundred and twenty disciples were present, Peter stand-

his own hands: intimating by this gentle, but evasive answer, that altho an inquiry into these curious matters, could not well be considered among *very blameable things*; yet it certainly deserved *no encouragement*.

ing

ing up, made the following proposal.—How 16. 17. 18.
dreadfully, said he, Judas hath applied to himself 19. 20.
that passage in the psalms, in *making his habitation*
desolate, both by his unnatural treason, and his
violent death; you all know. Let it be our busi-
ness then to fulfil a second passage in the psalms;
and as he hath *made his habitation desolate*, let us
provide, that, *another may take his office*. From 21. 22.
those therefore, who have accompanied the Lord
Jesus, through the whole of his ministry—from his
baptism till his resurrection, let us ordain one to be
a witness, together with us, of that great event.—
This proposal being agreeable to the whole assembly, 23. 24. 25.
they resolved according to the ancient Jewish cus-
tom on solemn occasions, to leave the matter to the
appointment of the Almighty, by a decision of lots.
They proposed therefore two persons, Joseph, called
Justus, and Matthias; and praying to God, as the
searcher of hearts, to direct their choice, they gave
out the lots. Matthias, being the chosen person, 26.
immediately joined the eleven apostles.

18. *Purchased a field*—that is, *was the cause of purchasing*. This
is a common mode of speaking.

23. See Levit. xvi. 8—Numbers xxvi. 55—Josh. xiii. 6—
Judg. xx. 9—1 Chron. xxiv. 5—Prov. xvi. 33.

25. The words, *that he might go to his own place*, have occa-
sioned some difficulty. Many interpreters refer them to Judas,
who was *to go to the punishment he deserved*. I rather, with other
interpreters, refer them to the new-elected apostle; who *was to*
take the place assigned him.

CHAP.

II.

1. The time now approached, when the great promise of the Holy Ghost was to be fulfilled. The circumstances of that wonderful event were these.

2. As the whole body of the disciples were assembled at the celebration of the feast of pentecost; they were at first astonished with a sound, like a rushing wind, which filled the house, in which they sat. This was succeeded by a luminous appearance, like fire; which in the form of tongues, rested on the head

3. of each person present. The effect immediately followed. They were all inspired with the Holy Ghost; and found themselves endowed with a miraculous power of speaking languages.

5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

10. 11. 12.

There were, at this time, at Jerusalem, on the occasion of the feast, a numerous body of Jews, and

1. As it was provided by the providence of God, that Christ should suffer, and rise again, at the time of the passover, when the greatest number of people were assembled; so likewise, for the same reason most probably, the Holy Ghost was given at the time of the pentecost; and no doubt, the numbers of strangers who saw that great miracle, prepared the way, on their return home, for the better reception of the gospel in their several countries.—They who received the Holy Ghost, seem not only to have been the apostles; but at least the hundred and twenty disciples besides, who are mentioned Acts i. 15.—The word *ὁμοθυμαδον*, with one accord, seems put in to shew, that all heart-burnings, and jealousies about superiority had now ceased among the apostles; and that they were perfectly unanimous in the great work they had in hand.

3. *ἑκάστης ἐκείνων* does not properly signify *clown*, as we translate it; but *distributed* i. e. among them. This sense however, which appears to be a corrupt one, gave the idea probably of the mitre, with which the ancient bishop was adorned.

5. *Dwelling at Jerusalem*, means only sojourning there at that time. See the sense of the original word given by Grotius. Acts ii. 5.

profelytes,

profelytes, from several parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia; who being informed of this great event, had conversation with the disciples; and were astonished to hear them discourse with every man, in his own language, on the great truths of the gospel.

Opposition however soon arose against the apostles; and such of the Jews particularly, as were prejudiced against the gospel, gave out, that these languages, which the disciples of Jesus were said to speak, were only the effect of drunkenness.

On this Peter entered largely into the affair. He first shewed the absurdity of any such supposition, were it only because it was the hour of morning-sacrifice. It could not be supposed, they would perform divine worship in an act of *drunkenness*; when every serious Jew thought himself bound in conscience to perform it *fasting*.—He then called to their remembrance, the prophecy of Joel; who very distinctly points out the effusion of God's Spirit in the days of the Messiah, on people of all condi-

11. Here is no mention made of the Greek language; from whence some have supposed the Greek was not among the inspired languages; as indeed it was then almost every where vernacular. But I suppose every language was inspired, if unknown, and wanted.—The great necessity of this gift in the early propagation of christianity, is set in a very strong light by Crantz's relation of the Greenland mission; in which, among a variety of difficulties, the great impediment was, not being able, during many years, to communicate by speech.

16. See Joel ii. 28, &c.

19. 20. tions; reminding them, at the same time, of the threatenings, which are held out, in that remarkable prophecy—the misery, which is denounced—and the destruction, which is to follow on the whole Jewish nation.—Lastly, he dwelt on the means of salvation, which the prophet promises in the following words; *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord,*
21. *shall be saved.*—Consider, said he, to whom the prophet alludes in this passage. That holy person, Jesus of Nazareth, who wrought so many miracles among you, and whom, (tho he voluntarily died for mankind, and could not be held by the grave,) you cruelly, and unjustly put to death, hath God now raised from the dead; according to another prophecy, that of David, who represents the Messiah
22. 23. 24. triumphing over the grave: *Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: my flesh also shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption.*
25. 26. 27. —The holy prophet, continued the apostle, could not speak this of himself; for he is both dead, and buried; and his sepulchre is with us to this day.
28. But knowing, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost,
29. that God intended the Messiah should spring from his seed; he undoubtedly in the spirit of prophecy,
30. speaks of that great event, the resurrection of Jesus,
31. 32.

22. *A man approved of God.* The original rather signifies, *a man pointed out to you by God*, through the means of miracles, &c.

25. Psalm xvi. 9.

of which we are witnesses.—After his resurrection, 33.
 he was received into glory; and hath now fulfilled
 his promise, by sending this miraculous gift upon
 his followers; the effect of which you now see, and
 hear.—His ascension also is as much the subject 34-35.
 of prophecy, as his resurrection. When David says,
*The Lord said unto my Lord; Sit thou on my right
 hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*; he cannot
 possibly be supposed to apply the words to himself:
 but to the exalted power of the Messiah.—Let the 36.
 house of Israel then, at length be assured, (added the
 apostle, in conclusion,) that that Jesus, whom they
 crucified, is the undoubted Messiah, the redeemer of
 the world.

Words never produced more effect on a multitude, 37.
 than this speech of Peter. His audience, many of
 whom had probably either been concerned in the death
 of Jesus, or consented to it; were confounded by his
 reasoning; and eagerly besought him, and the rest of
 the apostles, to instruct them how to avoid those
 heavy judgments denounced by the prophet.

Peter earnestly exhorted them to be baptized in the 38.
 faith of Christ; and by amending their hearts, to

34. Pf. cx. i.

38. *Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.* It is
 remarkable, that when the Jews are spoken of as baptized, they
 are commonly baptized in *the name of Jesus Christ*; as they gene-
 rally disallowed him to be the Messiah. But the Gentiles, with
 whom the controversy was not so much concerning the *true Mes-*
siah, as concerning the *true God*, were baptized in the name of
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. See Lightfoot, v. II. p.
 122.

39. make themselves fit objects for the remission of their sins, and the reception of the Holy Spirit; which, with the other promises of the gospel, were offered to them; and to all the faithful people of God, wherever dispersed.—To this he added other exhortations; frequently reminding them of the judgments which should speedily overthrow the Jewish nation; and which he warned them to endeavour with sincere repentance to avoid.

41. 42. 43. At the conclusion of these exhortations, not fewer
44. 45. 46. than three thousand were baptized, and embraced the
47. faith

39. *To all that were afar off.* By this expression the apostle probably had reference only to the dispersed Israelites; but the *Holy Spirit* might have reference to the Gentiles. See Ephes. ii. 13.

41. It is probable, the other apostles also might assist in making the same exhortations to other bodies of strangers, and that they all contributed to this wonderful, and sudden conversion.

42. *Breaking of bread* here, is not generally considered by interpreters in this sense. But, I think, from it's being placed between the apostle's doctrine, and prayer, it cannot well have the acceptation of a common meal; tho, I think, common meals seem to be understood by the same expression in v. 46.

45. Many interpreters do not suppose, they had a community in all things; but I think from the case of Ananias, it is very plain they had; tho it as plainly appears, from what St. Peter said on that occasion, that this communication, was a *voluntary* one: and from many passages of scripture, we may gather, that it was meant only to be a *temporary* one. In the gospels, and epistles, a distinction is always supposed between poor, and rich; nor could the affairs of the world possibly be carried on without it. At this early time indeed when all charity ceased towards Christians, but among themselves, a *communication* of property seems to have been necessary.

47. *Such as should be saved* says the text: but not so much as should be saved by the determined will of God; but such as (v. 40. 42) saved themselves from that untoward generation, by continuing in

faith of Christ. The generality of the people indeed were only astonished at what they had seen; but the true believers were still confirmed more steadily in their profession—joining with the apostles in prayer, and the celebration of the Lord's supper—praising, and thanking God for his mercies—selling their possessions, that all might have a community in worldly things—and uniting with each other in every instance of love, and kindness, with cheerfulness and sincerity.—This generous behaviour drew upon the infant-church the respect and reverence of all observers: and numbers daily joined themselves to their communion.

The peace and happiness, which the church enjoyed, endured not long. It was first disturbed on the following occasion.—As Peter, and John were going to prayer in the temple, a lame man, who had been a cripple from his youth, and was laid at what was called the *Beautiful-gate*, every day, by his friends, begged for alms. As he expected, from the attention, with which the apostles beheld him, to receive some present relief, Peter told him, that as for the riches of this world, he had none to give; but that what was in his power, he should confer on him. He then bad him, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,

in the apostles doctrine.—Besides *re; out of the way*; cannot with any propriety be rendered, such as *should be saved*; but *such as were saved*: that is, such as were placed by baptism, faith, and repentance, in a state of salvation; but this state they must of course maintain afterwards by a holy life.

arise

CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

3.

4. 5.

6.

7. 8. arise and walk. On this the man immediately received perfect strength; and went with them into the temple to praise God for his mercy.
9. 10. 11. This great miracle occasioned a vast concourse of people in Solomon's porch; where Peter, and John, and the man, as they came out of the temple, were presently furrounded.
12. 13. 14. 15. 16. Peter thinking this a proper occasion to instruct the multitude, thus spoke.—Men of Israel, said he, be not surprized at what you have just seen; nor consider us as more than the instruments of this great miracle. That Jesus, whom you denied before Pilate, and by wicked suggestions put to death, hath God raised from the dead. We are the witnesses of his resurrection; and alledge this great miracle done in his name, and through faith in him, as a proof of that wonderful event.—And yet I will not suppose, that the murderers of the holy Jesus, knew whom they put to death. Be that as it may, the prophecies, which foretold the Messiah's death, were thus completed.—Fully convinced then, from this miracle, of the completion of these prophecies, let me exhort you to faith, repentance, and holy lives. Let
- 17.
- 18.
19. 20. 21.

16. It may be supposed, that as the impotent man had lain long at the gate of the temple, he had had frequent opportunities of hearing of the miracles of Jesus.—This verse is a striking example of the inaccuracies, which improper pointing sometimes introduces into the sacred text. If the middle part of the verse were pointed properly, the sense, which is now embarrassed, would be easy. Τούτων οὐ διαμαρτυρεῖ, καὶ οὐδαμῶς, ἀποκρίνωσιν. Τοῦ ονόματος, &c. Θεοῦ, in the former verse, is nominative case to ἀποκρίνωσιν.

me exhort you also to the recollection of another great event coming forward—the general doom, and judgment of mankind, by that same Jesus, whose gospel is now preached. Hear what your great law-giver, Moses himself, says on this head; *a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him shall you hear; and every soul that will not hear that prophet, shall be cut off from the people.*—Nor did Moses alone predict these things; but all the succeeding prophets unite in declaring, that to you first, as the children of the covenant, hath God published salvation through Jesus Christ, if you are convinced by his resurrection, and will lead holy lives.

22. 23.

24.

25. 26.

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2. 3.

While Peter was thus speaking to the people, the priests, and Sadducees, and officers of the temple, came upon him, and seized both him and John; and threw them into prison; being greatly disturbed at finding the doctrine of the resurrection preached; and at it's acquiring additional strength by the resurrection of Jesus.—This violence however did not prevent the effects of the apostles exhortations; for the number of profelytes was now increased to about five thousand.

4.

22. Deut. xviii. 18, 19.

4. It does not appear that five thousand *new* profelytes were added; but that what were now added, made the number five thousand. Erasmus is of this opinion. Jam enim numerus credentium accreverat usque ad quinque virorum millia.

5. 6. 7. The next day the chief priests, and elders called a council; and sending for the apostles, bad them give a plain account of their transaction with the lame man, which had occasioned so much disturbance.—
8. 9. With the dignity of an inspired apostle, Peter told them, that to this enquiry a ready answer might be given. Through the name of Jesus Christ, said he, whom you crucified, and whom God raised from the dead, hath this great miracle been performed. He is that stone, which was set at naught by you builders; and which is notwithstanding, the head of the corner—the only origin, and source of salvation to mankind.
10. 11. 12. The Jewish priests being well informed, that the two apostles had been the companions of Jesus; and knowing them to be obscure, illiterate men, were astonished at the dignity, and spirit, with which Peter spoke. At the same time, seeing the man, who had been healed, standing before them, they were unable to deny the fact. Commanding the apostles therefore to go aside, they consulted what was best to be done; and at length resolved to forbid them to preach any longer in the name of Jesus.—But Peter, and John, with great firmness, bad them con-
13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19.

13. It is no wonder they were surprized; for Peter's speeches are very convincing pieces of composition.

19. We have a noble expression of the same kind, which Plato puts in the mouth of Socrates: He tells his judges, that he was determined to avouch his doctrine; and that for this reason;
πιστεύειν τῷ Θεῷ, μάλλον ἢ ὑμῖν.

fider,

sider, whether it were right to listen to God, or them? and gave them to understand, that they certainly should continue to give their testimony to the great truths, which had been intrusted to them. —The chief priests however, satisfied with threatening them a second time, set them at liberty; being afraid of the people, on whom the restoration of a man, who had been forty years lame, had had a wonderful effect.

The apostles being dismissed, retired to their company; and reported what had happened: In consequence of this deliverance the church united in a thanksgiving to God. —They praised him for all his wonderful works—and particularly for the completion of his holy promises in the ineffectual efforts of all the enemies of religion—and concluded with begging God's assistance in giving them courage, and ability to preach his word; and power to confirm the truth of it by miracles. —When their prayer was concluded, the place, where they had assembled, was shaken as before, by a strong wind; and the Holy Ghost fell on all who were present, inspiring them with new powers to continue the great work, in which they were engaged.

31. It is left undetermined by St. Luke, what number of new proselytes were assembled on this occasion, and received the Holy Ghost. It seems most probable, that the whole five thousand were present. The only difficulty is, how so great a number should be accommodated in one place.

In

32. 33.

In the mean time, while the apostles bore testimony to the truth of the gospel, particularly to the resurrection of Christ, love, and kindness, in the highest degree, were exercised among all, who embraced the faith. No man claimed a property in any thing, he possessed. So that, of course, neither
 34. superfluity, nor want, existed among them. The
 35. common stock was put into the hands of the apostles, who distributed it according to their discretion.

36. 37.

Among those, who converted their estates into public property, the most considerable was Joses of Cyprus, a Levite, who sold some lands, which he possessed in that island, and brought the produce to the apostles. This holy person obtained afterwards the surname of Barnabas. But among other professors of christianity, there was a certain person of the name of Ananias, who with his wife Sapphira, wished to gain the credit of this disinterested behaviour, without subjecting themselves to the worldly inconveniences of it. They might wish also to gain, at an easy rate, a share in the public contributions. Ananias therefore sold his lands; and out of the produce, brought a *certain part* to the apostles, as if it had been the *whole*. But instead of meeting

CHAP.

V.

1. 2.

3.

35. The sacrifices of the temple, of which the common people partook, were a great relief to the Jewish poor. As the Christian converts were deprived of this, some other relief was the more necessary. Hence community of property seems to have arisen.

the

the approbation he expected, Peter gave him a severe rebuke, for attempting to deceive the Spirit of God. Before the land was sold, said he, was it not your own? And afterwards, was not the price your own likewise? Who demanded it of you? You have not endeavoured to deceive man only; but the Holy Spirit of God.—On hearing this, Ananias fell down instantly dead; which threw a religious fear on all, who were present.

About three hours after he had been carried out to his burial, his wife knowing nothing of the matter, came in: and Peter asking her, Whether the price, that had been brought, was the full value of the land? She affirmed, it was. Then Peter spoke to her in the same severe language, in which he had spoken to her husband; and taxed her with the great sin of endeavouring to deceive the Holy Spirit of God. On this she too fell down dead; and was carried out, and buried near her husband.

The exemplary punishment, which God thought proper to inflict on this occasion, added great weight

10. Some exemplary punishment seemed necessary to prevent people's joining the apostles on false pretences; and discrediting the Christian religion in it's infancy by worldly motives. This effect, as we are told (ver. 13) immediately followed.—But this offers no argument in favour of persecution. Who inflicted the punishment? was it man, or God?

11. There is some confusion in the order of the verses here; which may be restored in the following manner, which Bowyer tells us, he had from the mouth of Bp. Sherlock. 11. *And great fear came upon all the church, and as many as heard these things.*

14 *And*

weight and reverence to the apostolic character; no man daring from henceforward, to unite himself with the apostles *on any worldly motives*. Multitudes however of true believers were daily added to the church; through the efficacy of the miracles, which were wrought in the most public manner—often in the streets; where the sick were brought in couches; and found it sufficient to receive the shadow of Peter, as he passed by. From several parts of the country also, around Jerusalem, sick people were brought to the apostles; and immediately found a cure.

17. The chief priests, and Sadducees, of which sect
18. were most of the Jewish doctors, being exceedingly
19. provoked at these proceedings, seized the apostles
20. again, and threw them into prison. But it pleased
21. God to deliver them in the night, by an angel;
22. 23.] under whose direction they went in the morning, as
usual, into the temple, and taught the people.
21. The chief priests, in the mean time, called a council;
22. 23.] and sent to the prison for the apostles. The
officers returned with an account, that they had
found the prison shut, and guarded; but that the

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. 12 And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the rest durst no one join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs, and wonders wrought; 15 insomuch, that they brought, &c. See Bowyer's conjectures.

prisoners

prisoners were gone. While the council were per- 24.
 plexed at this unaccountable event, they received 25.
 information, that the men, whom they had impri-
 soned the day before, were, at that very time, preach- 26. 27. 28.
 ing in the temple. On this they sent a guard, and
 brought them without violence (for they feared the
 people) and questioned them for their insolence in
 teaching a religion, which the council had forbidden
 them to propagate any farther. You have filled
 Jerusalem, said they, with your doctrines; and
 seem desirous of bringing this man's blood upon us.
 — The apostles answered with that firmness, which 29.
 they had shewn before, that it was their duty to
 obey God, rather than man. The same Jesus, said 30. 31.
 they, whom you crucified, hath God raised from
 the dead, and exalted to be the Saviour of mankind,
 through the conditions of faith, and repentance.
 We are the witnesses of his resurrection; as is also 32.
 the Holy Ghost; the effects of whose gracious ope-
 rations you have seen so wonderfully displayed, —
 This bold language irritated the council so much, 33.
 that some of the warmest of them seemed to think
 they ought immediately to proceed capitally against
 the apostles. — There sat at that time however in 34.
 the council, an eminent doctor, named Gamaliel; 35.
 who removing the apostles, warned the assembly
 to be cautious what they did in this matter. We 36.
 have

36. Josephus mentions a person of the name of Theudas, who made an insurrection; but it was ten years after this time. Dr.

have heard of many people, said he, who have professed themselves to be the deliverers of Israel, whose attempts have come to nothing. Such was Theudas, who got together about four hundred men; but perished in his enterprize, together with his company. After him appeared Judas of Galilee, who drew together a great body of people: but he too lost his life, and all his followers were dispersed. Be advised therefore, and let these people alone. If their designs depend only on human means, like other designs of the same kind, they will come to nothing. But if they are of God, you yourselves may be crushed by opposing, what it will not be in your power to suppress.—This prudent advice had great weight with the assembly. They called in the apostles therefore, and ordering them to be scourged, dismissed them with strict injunctions to preach no more in the name of Jesus. They however, regardless of any menaces, and counting it matter of joy, that they were thought worthy of suffering for their religion, continued both publicly, and privately to preach the gospel.

CHAP.
VI.

1.

Soon after this, some unquietness arose in the Christian church (now become considerable) from another cause.—Among the Christian proselytes

Lardner (Cred. VI. p. 403) supposes two insurgents of that name. Archbp. Usher supposes it a mistake for another Judas, who made an insurrection, according to Josephus, a little after the death of Herod the great.

were

were many foreign Jews, who complained, that their poor did not receive an equal proportion from the common stock, with such Jews, as were natives of Judea.—The apostles, inquiring into this matter, called a general assembly of the church; and urging their own necessary avocations, in the ministry of the gospel, as not allowing them to attend to the distribution of alms; desired them to chuse, from the whole body of Christians, seven men of eminent sanctity, and wisdom, whom they might appoint over this business.—The proposal pleased the whole assembly; and they chose Stephen, a man of great piety, and Christian zeal; Philip; Procorus; Nicanor; Timon; Parmenas; and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch. These seven were brought to the apostles; who approved the choice; and, after solemn prayer, confirmed them in their office.

2. 3. 4.

5.

6.

In the mean time, the gospel continued to make a great progress; and began now to gain ground

7.

1. These Jews commonly spoke the Greek language, and were therefore called *Ελληνισται*: the native Greeks were called *Ελληνες*. But some are of opinion that the *Ελληνισται* were heathen converts to Judaism.

3. This verse is much used in the argument about church government; tho it seems to carry no authority in the question. The designation of these seven men was undoubtedly an apostolic act: but they seem to have been designed only to the office of almoners.

5. From the names it seems probable, that some of these were *Ελληνισται*; which shews it to have been an election of great impartiality. The last was certainly a foreigner.

8. among the higher ranks of people; many even of the priests having embraced it. But among the several professors of it, no man, except the apostles, contributed so much to extend it's influence as Stephen; who did not confine himself merely to the station, which had been assigned him; but with wonderful force of argument, as well as by miracles, displayed the power of the gospel.

9. There were at that time in Jerusalem, a body of foreign Jews, both Africans, and Asiatics, who had a synagogue appropriated to themselves, called the Synagogue of freedom. These men frequently engaged in dispute with Stephen on the mosaic dispensation:

10. 11. 12.
13.

but not being able to oppose him by argument, they commenced a prosecution against him; and stirring up many of the Scribes and Pharisees, and a large body of people, they brought him before the Sanhedrim; and accused him, by witnesses, whom they had suborned, of having spoken contemptuously both of the *temple*, and the *Jewish law*; and of asserting that *Jesus of Nazareth was come to destroy both.*

14.

15. —The countenance of Stephen, while he stood before the council, and heard so much malicious testimony against him, was full of that divine, and heavenly composure, which drew the attention of the whole assembly.

After

9. It is probable that all the foreign Jews had synagogues appropriated to themselves; some of which synagogues, as many Jews were freemen of Rome, might derive their title from thence.

After the witnesses had been heard, the high-priest asked him, What he had to say in his defence?— Stephen in a long apology, laboured to convince his hearers, that God was no *respector of places*—that their fathers had worshipped in various countries; and that even the temple itself was built late in the history of the Jews—He traced the divine dispensations from the

1.

2.

See Lardner's Credib. part I. ch. iii. Professor Gerdes supposes they took their name from Libertina, a city of Africa; which also Lardner seems to think a probable supposition.

2. As Stephen, was accused of conspiring to destroy the *Jewish temple, and the law*, it seems to be the most obvious intention of his thus recapitulating the history of the patriarchs, to shew, that the temple-establishment had not always existed; and that there was no necessity to suppose it always should exist; as the Jews especially had rendered themselves so unworthy of this divine dispensation by persecuting the prophets, and putting their Saviour to death.—Some interpreters give a different view of Stephen's argument. They say, the drift of it was to caution the Jews against rejecting Christ, as they had rejected Moses, and the prophets. This, no doubt, makes a *part* of his argument; but it does not seem the *purport* of it.—Others again suppose, that Stephen's great intention was to exhibit Joseph, and Moses as types of Christ; who were both rejected by their brethren, as Christ also was; and corresponded with him in many instances of their lives. This too he certainly has in view; but this does not appear to be the drift of his argument.—The following analysis I had from a friend. "Stephen, in reply to the charge against him, recapitulates the several incidents of the Jewish history, as we should do the articles of our creed. He then retorts the accusation of the Jews upon themselves. He shews, that a blasphemous contempt of Moses, and the law was not to be imputed to him; but to them, and to their forefathers—that their forefathers had always resisted the authority of Moses, when present; as they, on their part, had refused to acknowledge the authority of Moses, in the scriptures: for it was evident to all, who believed the Mosaic scriptures, that Moses prophesied of Christ. And as to his speaking blasphemously against the temple, he spoke of it only as he was warranted by what God

- the time of Abraham. That great patriarch, said
 3. 4. he, first worshipped God in Mesopotamia. From
 5. 6. 7. thence he was sent to Haram; and afterwards into
 the land, which you now inhabit. But he had no
 possession in it; resting merely on a promise, that
 his family, after suffering the miseries of bondage,
 should worship God there, as they had done in other
 8. places. But the covenant of circumcision was given
 long before; and that rite was observed by Abraham
 in his pilgrimage, just as it is observed by you at
 9. 10. 11. Jerusalem.—The next migration of our fathers,
 12. 13. 14. was into Egypt. Here Joseph, under the immediate
 15. 16. influence of God, saved the land of Egypt, and all

himself says in their own scriptures; where he intimates, that he does not mean to have his worship confined to any one particular place. He then reproaches them in bitter terms, for their obstinacy, and rebellion in resisting the Holy Ghost; and persecuting those, in the first instance, who prophesied of the just One; and afterwards that just One himself, when he made his appearance among them."—From these different explications, it is plain however, that the apology of Stephen is a difficult passage of scripture; and that it is hard to make out what the chief intention of it was. For myself, I am most inclined to the interpretation I have given; and have therefore abridged the detail of the history of the Jews, that Stephen's argument may appear with more force. At the same time, I think it very probable, that he might *intend covertly* to shew the Jews, that by rejecting Christ, and his apostles, they were pursuing the very steps of their forefathers, who had rejected the prophets.—There are other difficulties, tho I think of little importance, in this apology of Stephen. They regard chiefly the dates and numbers mentioned in the 4th, 6th, and 14th verses; and the burial of the patriarchs in the 16th.

7. *Will I judge.* Bp. Pearce observes, that the law *tries, sentences, and executes*; and that the word *κρίμα* relates sometimes to one, and sometimes to another, of these operations.

his

his father's house from the effects of a famine: and here Jacob, at his son's request, brought his family to sojourn. Here those holy patriarchs worshipped the God of their fathers; and here they finished their earthly course.—The evils of their posterity increasing, as the people multiplied; Moses, who had been educated by Pharaoh's daughter in the learning of Egypt; and had been obliged to fly the country for an ineffectual endeavour to assist his countrymen; was afterwards called by God to lead them out of bondage by a high hand.—But even Moses himself, the founder of the Jewish government, who received the law from God, through the mediation of an angel, is so far from supposing his institution to be of perpetual obligation, that he mentions the Messiah, under the title of a great prophet, who was to arise after him.—Consider also how unworthy this sinful nation hath made itself of a perpetual

17. 18. 19.

20. 21. 22.

23. 24. 25.

26. 27. 28.

29. 30. 31.

32. 33. 34.

35. 36. 37.

38.

39. 40. 41.

42. 43.

20. *And was exceeding fair*: Αἰνός τῷ Θεῷ. This mode of expression is agreeable to the Hebrew idiom. Great cedars are called, *cedars of God*. Pf. lxxx. 10, and great mountains, *mountains of God*. Pf. xxxvi. 6.—Josephus tells us, that nobody could look at Moses, without being struck with his beauty.

22. Moses is said to be mighty in *deeds*, as well as *words*; which some have imagined to allude to a story told by Josephus, that upon an invasion of Egypt by the Ethiopians, Moses was appointed general of the Egyptian forces, and drove the invaders back, with great slaughter. Antiq. lib. II. 10.

30. The burning bush, which was not consumed, is thought by many to have been a very apposite sign to Moses. The people whom he was to relieve, were indeed greatly oppressed: but it was as easy for God to deliver them from that oppression, as it was for him to prevent the bush from being consumed by the fire, that was in the midst of it. The one was a sign of the other.

establishment. From the times of Aaron, and the golden calf, recollect it's constant succession of idolatries, and rebellions. It is true, our fathers had the ark under a tabernacle in the wilderness, built after the fashion, which God had appointed—it is true also, that they carried it with them into the land of promise; and carefully maintained it, till the days of David; and afterwards till the days of Solomon; who was permitted to build that temple, which his father only designed.—All this is true; but it is as true, that God hath all along declared by his prophets, that he will not be considered, as dwelling in the narrow limits of a temple made with hands; but as filling the universe, which he hath created—as making heaven his throne, and earth his foot-stool.

51. 52. 53. —Stephen concluded his apology by telling the council; that he foresaw they would resist the Holy Spirit of God; and oppose the truth, as their fathers had done before them. The only difference was, that their fathers had persecuted those, who prophesied of the Messiah; while they had persecuted the Messiah himself: and that, in short, they were the persons, not he, who *had set at naught both Moses and his law.*

54. This severe charge threw the council into the utmost rage.—Stephen, seeing to what lengths their

43. The phrase, *taking up the tabernacle of Moluc*, relates to the practice of carrying about the image of the God Moluc, on solemn occasions, in a shrine.

malice would arise, told them, he was prepared for the utmost effects of it—that he saw heaven opened—and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.—

On this they cried out with loud voices—stopped their ears, as if such blasphemy was not fit to be heard; and rushing upon him with one accord,

58. 59. 60.

dragged him out of the city, and stoned him. He, in the mean time, throughly impressed with the spirit of the religion he had embraced, prayed for his murderers, and recommended his soul into the hands of his Saviour.—They, who stoned him,

CHAP.
VIII.

1. 2. 3. 4.

gave their garments in charge to a young man of the name of Saul; who stood by as an assenting spectator of the death of Stephen.—After the Jews had thus sated their vengeance, Stephen's friends were suffered to carry his dead body to burial; which they performed with great lamentations.

The death of this holy man was the beginning of a violent persecution against the church at Jerusalem; which separated in different ways to avoid

58. This seems not to have been a *judicial*, but a *tumultuary* action; what the Jews called the *judgment of zeal*. They could not legally put a criminal to death, without the cognizance of the Roman governor.—Some however are of opinion, that the *judgment of zeal* was permitted by the Romans.

59. The dying words of Stephen contain so plain an act of worship to Christ, that it seems difficult to evade them. They are not so strong indeed in our translation, as in the original, where the word *God* is not found.

it. None of any eminence continued in the city, except the apostles. Among such as took the most active part in this persecution, was Saul, who was very zealous in executing the orders of the Sanhedrim.—These efforts however to destroy Christianity, tended only to propagate it the more, by the preaching of those, who fled into other countries.

5. 6. 7. Among the most eminent of these preachers, was Philip, one of the seven deacons, who had been
8. ordained by the apostles. This holy man went to Samaria; and preached the gospel there with such power, and confirmed the truth of it with so many miracles; that the people universally attended to him; and the whole city was filled with religious joy.

9. 10. 11. There dwelt in Samaria, at that time, a person of the name of Simon, who had deceived the people by his pretences to miraculous powers; making them believe, he was something more than human.
12. 13. However, this person himself seemed so convinced by the preaching, and miracles of Philip, that he was baptized, as others had been; and professed himself a disciple.

14. 15. 16. Some time after, the apostles, at Jerusalem, hearing of the success of the gospel in Samaria, sent
17.

5. The old town of Samaria was at this time destroyed; so that Philip must have gone to some town in the *district of Samaria*.

Peter,

Peter, and John to give weight to the ministry there; and through the prayers of these apostles, all the new profelytes, who had yet only been baptized in the name of Jesus, received the Holy Ghost.

When Simon saw, that the apostles, by laying on their hands, conferred the Holy Ghost, and the power of working miracles; he made them an offer of a sum of money to grant him that privilege.—

But Peter, with great indignation, rebuked him, for supposing, the gift of God could be purchased by money. He told him, that he was yet wholly unacquainted with the spirit of the gospel; and bad him repent of his sins, and pray to God to forgive the wickedness of his heart.—Simon seemed greatly affected with the severity of this rebuke; and begged the apostles to join in prayer with him, that God would avert the evils, which they had threatened.

—Soon after, the two apostles returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in such of the Samaritan cities, as they passed through.

Philip, in the mean time, was sent on a different errand. He was ordered by the direction of an

18. 19.

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22. 23.

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26.

24. Some suppose, the expression, *Pray ye to the Lord for me,* &c. was spoken as an ironical taunt.

25. It seems, that the account of these two apostles coming from Jerusalem, is introduced here for the sake of the relation of Simon Magus; about whom there might have been probably, at that time, some misrepresentations, which it was thought necessary to obviate.

angel,

- angel, to go to the road, which leads from Jerusalem to Gaza, as it enters the desert. There a person of great authority, in the court of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, was returning home from Jerusalem, where he had been worshipping (as all serious proselytes were accustomed to do at the great feasts) and Philip was ordered by the Spirit to join him. He found the Ethiopian reading the prophecy of Isaiah, and asked him, if he understood what he read? The other answered, he did not; and conceiving Philip to be a person of information, desired him to come up to him into his chariot, and explain it. The passage he read, was in the fifty-third chapter: *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so he opened not his mouth: in his humiliation, his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.* Now of whom, said the Ethiopian, doth the prophet speak—of himself, or of some other person?—Philip, beginning at this

26. Arrian, in his history of Alexander, mentions Gaza as the last town, that was inhabited, before you enter the desert between Phenicia and Egypt.

27. As the word *Εὐεργετης* has an ambiguous sense, signifying also sometimes a chamberlain, I leave it undetermined.

27. Pliny speaking of an island, appendent on Ethiopia, under the name of Meroe, tells us, that Candace reigned there, quod nomen multis jam annis, ad reginas transit. Hist. Nat. Lib. VI. Strabo also mentions Candace, queen of Meroe in Ethiopia, Lib. XVII.

33. A person's judgment being taken away, was a sort of proverb for being oppressed. See Job. xxvii. 2.

passage,

passage, opened to him the dispensation of the gospel; and by his discourse produced such an effect on the Ethiopian, that when they came to a pool of water, he desired, he might immediately be admitted to baptism. Philip asked him, if he believed sincerely in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Ethiopian professing his faith, was accordingly baptized. After the ceremony, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip to Azotas; where he preached the gospel; and from thence in all the other towns in his way to Cæsarea. In the mean time the Ethiopian returned home full of religious joy.

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37.

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39. 40.

CHAP.
IX.

1. 2.

During these transactions, Saul, who was one of the most zealous persecutors of the church, having heard that many Christians had fled to Damascus, desired letters from the high-priest to the synagogue there, ordering them to deliver to him all the

40. The miraculous mission of Philip to Gaza, to meet the Ethiopian, was, no doubt, an intervention of Providence to prepare the way for the gospel in Ethiopia; where, as Eusebius informs us, this treasurer of queen Candace first planted it. The manner, in which Philip was conveyed away from the Ethiopian, seems to have been intended as a miracle, to convince him of the truth of the religion, he had just embraced.

2. Damascus in Syria stands upon a plain so extensive (as Maundrel informs us) that the mountains which surround some parts of it, are only just discernable. The river Barrady which issues from the mountain of Antilibanus, runs through the plain; and arriving at Damascus, divides into three streams: the intermediate one passes through the town; and the other two, on each side, circle it's suburbs. The city, as you approach it, makes a grand appearance; it's mosques, steeples, and minarets being very stately.

Jews

3. Jews of that persuasion; that he might bring them to be punished at Jerusalem. Having received a commission, he set out on his journey. But as he approached Damascus, a sudden light from heaven
4. shone round him; and as he fell to the ground, he heard a voice saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? He had recollection enough to ask,
5. Who it was, that spoke? The voice answered, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. Why opposest thou the will of God? Saul overwhelmed with amazement, and struck at once with horror at his late conduct, asked trembling, What he should do? Go to Damascus, returned the voice, and it shall there be told thee. In the mean time, the men, who travelled with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but not understanding the import of it.—As for Saul, as soon as he had raised himself from the ground, he found he was deprived of

5. Lord Barrington (miscel. fac. eff. 3) ingeniously supposes, that Paul being a learned Jew, knew this light to be the Shechinah; and that it imported the divine presence. He therefore with confidence asked, *Who art thou Lord?*—It is hard for thee, to kick against pricks, was a proverbial expression, signifying impotent rage, that hurts only ourselves.

7. When St. Paul gives an account of this vision at Jerusalem, (Acts xxii. 9) he says, the men *heard not the voice*; tho in this verse, he says *they did hear it*. The contradiction is very easily reconciled by supposing, they were so terrified, that they heard nothing articulate.

8. Saul's being deprived of sight, and restored to it again, expresses, as some suppose, the idea of that darkness, in which he had formerly lived; and of the light which now shone upon him.

his fight; and was obliged to be led into Damascus; where he continued three days in a state of contrition, prayer, and fasting.——At the end of that time, a Christian, of the name of Ananias, who lived at Damascus, was sent by a heavenly vision to restore him to fight. Ananias, knowing the character of Saul, could not help expressing his apprehensions of him. But he was given to understand how great a conversion had been wrought in him; and to what eminence he should hereafter arise in the Christian church, as the great apostle of the Gentiles. Ananias, thus instructed, went to Saul, and told him, that Jesus, who had spoken to him on the road, restored him to fight; adding, that he should receive the Holy Ghost. His fight being accordingly restored, he was baptized; and recovered by degrees from that state of distress, into which he had been thrown. Then joining himself to the disciples, he began to preach the gospel, to the great astonishment of all, who had known his former life; and applying all his learning in the Jewish law, to the support of Christianity, he confounded the Jews, who dwelt at Damascus; and

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10. 11. 12.
13. 14.
15. 16. 17.
18. 19.
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11. *Tarsus* was a town in Cilicia, famous both for it's trade, and for being a seat of learning. It is supposed to be the old Tarshish, mentioned so often in the old Testament.

20. *Paul preached Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God*: the precise meaning here is, that he affirmed and proved that *that Jesus, who had been crucified at Jerusalem, was the Messiah.*

proved

proved plainly, from their own scriptures, that Jesus was the Messiah.

23. 24. 25. Some time after, the Jews laid in wait for him, and watched at the gate of the city to seize, and destroy him. But Saul, being informed of their intention, escaped over the wall, and went to Jerusalem. Here also he was at first received with suspicion; till Barnabas carried him to the apostles, and related all the circumstances of his conversion, and faith; on which he continued to preach in concert with them.—Here too with great strength of argument, he disputed with the Grecian Jews. Afterwards when they attempted to seize him, the apostles thought it proper to send him to Tarsus.

31. At this time, the churches, which were now multiplied, had peace; and rejoiced in the goodness of the Lord. Peter taking the opportunity of this quiet season, made a progress among them; and went first to Lydda. Here he found a person of the name of Eneas who had been eight years a paralytic, whom he healed in the name of Jesus

26. This was the journey, which Paul mentions Gal. i. 18.

34. The word *επαρον* does not properly signify *make thy bed*: but *make the room ready for thy guests*. The same word is used in that sense, Mark xiv. 15, and Luke xxii. 12.—The case seems to be this. Peter was in Eneas's house, with other guests, as was not uncommon in the houses of sick people, when only *confined*; as in this paralytic case. To shew therefore the greatness of the cure, Peter bad Eneas arise, and himself make his room ready for his guests.

Christ;

Christ; and by this miracle converted many of the Jews, who dwelt at Lydda, and in the vale of Saron.

35.

Another miracle also, which he performed at that time, had great effect in converting the Jews of those parts.——A pious, and very charitable woman at Joppa, of the name of Tabitha, being dead, the disciples there sent two of their body to Peter at Lydda, to desire him to come to them. Peter immediately went; and was carried into an upper chamber; where he found the corpse laid out for burial; and a number of poor widows standing round it, lamenting their loss; and shewing their several garments which the holy woman had given them. Peter removing them from the chamber, that their lamentations might not interrupt his prayers, kneeled down, and prayed fervently to God. He then arose, and calling her by her name, her life returned; and she was presented by the apostle to her friends in perfect health.——After this, Peter continued at Joppa some time longer; during which the divine Providence brought about one of the greatest events of the Christian church.

36. 37. 38.
39. 40. 41.
42.

43.

35. Lydda was a celebrated town in Judea, in which were public schools; and where the Sanhedrim sometimes met.——The vale of Saron, or Sharon, was remarkable for the many villages that were scattered about it, and for its rich pasturage. See 1 Chron. xxvii. 29.

36. Joppa was a sea-port, on the Mediterranean, not far from Lydda.

CHAP.

X.

1. 2.

3. 4. 5. 6.

7. 8.

9. 10.

11. 12.

13.

It happened, that among the Roman troops at this time stationed at Cæsarea, was a centurion of the name of Cornelius; a man of eminent piety, and charity; which through his example, were diffused through his family. This person, being favoured by an angelic vision, importing the acceptance of his good works in the sight of God, was ordered to send to Joppa for the apostle Peter, who should instruct him in a still purer faith, than he had yet received: in obedience to which vision Cornelius immediately sent proper persons on so desirable an errand.

In the mean time it pleased God, as this was the first instance of Gentile conversion, to allay the prejudices, which Peter might have on that subject, in the following manner.—The apostle having been at prayer, and being afterwards hungry, while food was preparing for him, fell into a trance, and saw a large sheet, held by the four corners, full of different kinds of animals, clean, and unclean, descending towards him. As he stood beholding it, a voice

1. At the time of this transaction, the gospel had been carried to the utmost verge of Judea; and this was the breaking down of the partition-wall—the *veil of the temple rent in twain*.

2. The expression *φοβούμενος τον θεον* commonly signifies a person, who acknowledged, and worshipped the true God; but did not pay obedience to the law. He was called a proselyte of the gate by some: while others allow no such person; but suppose the Jews divided mankind merely into Jews, and Gentiles. See the question discussed in Dr. Lardner's *evangel. writers*, chap. xviii.

from

from heaven bad him take, and use without distinction. Peter offended at the idea, said, he had never been accustomed to eat any thing unclean. The voice answered, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou unclean. This was repeated three several times. While Peter was hesitating, and doubting in himself, what might be the meaning of this vision, he had a secret intimation from the Holy Spirit, that three persons, who then waited for him, should explain the intention of what he had seen; and was ordered to accompany them without objection. Peter immediately going down, found the messengers from Cornelius; and asking the cause of their coming to him, was informed of the several circumstances of the vision, which Cornelius had seen. Peter kept them with him that night; and the next day set out with them to Cæsarea, attended by some of the brethren from Joppa.

The next morning, they arrived at Cæsarea; where Cornelius, with a company of his friends, was expecting them. When Peter's arrival was known,

16. A third action has generally been considered, both among sacred, and prophane authors, as a sign of earnestness, and certainty. Thus St. Paul says, *I besought the Lord thrice*; and thus Virgil,

—Terque ipsa solo, mirabile dictu,
Emicuit—

25. Many interpreters suppose, that Cornelius took Peter for an angel; but his having been the subject of an angel's mission

- known, Cornelius went out to meet him, and fell
 26. down at his feet. But Peter raising him, gently re-
 27. buked him for giving that honour to a man, which
 28. was due only to God. Peter then entering the
 house, and seeing so numerous a company assem-
 29. bled; made an apology for himself, as a Jew, for
 this familiar intercourse with Gentiles; saying that
 God had instructed him to make no distinction be-
 30. 31. 32. tween them, and the Jews. He then inquired into
 33. 34. the reason, why Cornelius had sent for him.—
 Cornelius related the particulars of his vision; which
 Peter comparing with what he himself had seen,
 said, he was now fully convinced, that God made
 no distinction, among the several nations of the
 35. world; but was ready to admit all religious people
 36. of every denomination, as well as Jews, to the
 blessings of the gospel. He then set before them
 the great object of a Christian's faith—Jesus Christ,
 37. sent by God to be the Saviour of the world—who,
 after John the Baptist had prepared his way by
 38. preaching repentance, had, under the influence of
 39. 40. 41. the Holy Spirit, wrought many miracles to esta-
 blish

was certainly ground enough for Cornelius to consider him as a person of high dignity. The Romans never used prostration to any human being.

30. *Four days ago I was fasting until this hour: that is, four days ago I kept a fast from the morning, till the ninth hour.*

41. The expression, *not unto all the people, but unto chosen witnesses*, has given great offence to free-thinkers. Why not unto all the people?—God Almighty might have many reasons.
 One

blish the faith of mankind in his doctrine. Of these great events, and of his death, and glorious resurrection, Peter told them, he, and the rest of the apostles, were witnesses, chosen by God. They had been conversant with Jesus, both before, and after his resurrection; and were appointed to publish to mankind, remission of sins, through faith and repentance—to inform the world, that Jesus will be the judge of quick, and dead—and to open, and unfold all the prophecies, which bear testimony to the great truths concerning him. 42. 43.

While Peter was thus speaking, it pleased God, on this solemn occasion of the first Gentile conversion, to pour out on all, who were present, the gift of the Holy Ghost; with it's miraculous accompaniment of speaking languages.—This exceedingly astonished the Jewish Christians, who came with Peter. That apostle however conceiving the gift of the Holy Ghost to be a sufficient evidence of the faith of these converts, ordered them imme- 44. 45. 46. 47. 48.

One or two even human prudence may suggest. Suppose Christ had shewn himself formally to the chief priests, and they had attempted again, as they probably would, to seize him: he must by a miracle have escaped out of their hands. And might not this have given occasion to their saying, that the resurrection also was a mere *illusion*?—Suppose again, his enemies, who *had seen* him, should have denied it (as they appear to have been capable of anything) would not this have made their evidence, if appealed to, worse, than their giving no evidence at all?—Besides, all the people *might* have seen him, *if they had pleased*: all that is meant is, that the apostles only were the *appointed, chosen* witnesses. Five hundred together, we know, at one time, did see him. 1 Cor. xv. 6.

diately to be baptized.—After this, he continued, at the request of these new disciples, some days longer at Cæsarea.

CHAP.
XI.

1.

2. 3.

4. 5. 6. 7. 8.
9. 10. 11.
12. 13. 14.
15. 16.

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18.

In the mean time, the account of what had happened at Cæsarea, being brought to Jerusalem, gave much offence to the Jewish Christians, who thought the privileges of the law had been invaded; infomuch, that when Peter returned to Jerusalem, he found the matter very ill-understood; and many of the disciples disposed to find fault with his behaviour.—On this he gave them a plain relation of the whole affair from the beginning—of the vision which *he* had seen—of the vision, which *Cornelius* had seen—of his visit to that pious centurion; and of the descent of the Holy Ghost. He then put them in mind of what Jesus himself had said, that *John indeed baptized with water; but that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost*; and concluded with saying, that as God had signified his pleasure that the Gentiles should be admitted to the same communion with themselves, it was not his part surely to oppose the will of God.—This relation of the affair had it's full effect; and the whole assembly united in praising God for making the Gentiles partakers with them of the benefits of the gospel.

While

While these things were doing at Cæsarea, the 19. 20. 21.
 gospel began to extend in another quarter, as far as
 Antioch, and the country in it's neighbourhood.
 Here it was preached by some of the disciples,
 who had fled from Jerusalem, on the persecution,
 which had followed Stephen's death; and being ac-
 companied by miracles, had great success. It was
 now preached both to Jews, and Gentiles.

The apostles at Jerusalem being informed of the 22.
 disposition of Antioch to receive the gospel, imme-
 diately sent Barnabas thither; who found great cause 23.
 for rejoicing; and exhorted the new converts to
 continue steadily in the faith they had professed.
 Barnabas was a man of a mild, and amiable disposi- 24.
 tion; and being aided by the gifts, and graces of
 the Holy Spirit, he won greatly upon the people;
 and brought a large addition to the church. But 25.
 thinking there was still occasion for more assistance,
 he went to Tarsus for Saul; and returned with him
 to Antioch. Here these two apostles continued a 26.

19. Ελληνισται; in some copies is Ελληνες; and indeed there seems to be a distinction between the Grecians mentioned ver. 20, and the Jews mentioned ver 19. See a note on Acts vi. 1.

26. The word χρηματιζω properly signifies obtaining a name from a calling; of which kind of names we have many in England, as *Smith, Miller, Carpenter, &c.* One should imagine the name of Christian was first given in contempt; both because the people of Antioch were said to be of a scurrilous, jesting humour; and because Tacitus, when he mentions Christians, expresses himself under this idea, *vulgus christianos appellat.*—The word apostle is not always strictly confined to the twelve. Barnabas is called an apostle. Acts xiv. 14.

27. 28.

full year; and formed a very considerable church; the members of which were first known by the name of Christians.—About the end of the year, a disciple of the name of Agabus, coming with some other disciples from Jerusalem, declared at Antioch, in the spirit of prophecy, that there should soon be a great famine through Judea, which accordingly came to pass. On this the church of Antioch made a collection for their brethren there; and sent it to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas, and Saul.

29.

CHAP.
XII.

1. 2. 3. 4.

While the affairs of the church were in this prosperous situation at Cæsarea, and Antioch, Herod Agrippa, with a view to please the Sanhedrim, began a severe persecution against the Christians at Jerusalem. He first put James, the son of Zebedee, to death; and soon after apprehending Peter, threw him into prison; with a view to execute him also,

28. Οικουμενη, in the original, is supposed by some to signify the Roman empire; but it is most commonly confined in this passage to Judea. Josephus speaks of a famine in *Judea* at this time, but mentions no other place; and indeed if it had raged in Syria, the Christians there, could not have been so well able to send relief to their brethren in *Judea*.

1. This Herod was the grandson of Herod the great; and is represented by Josephus, as a pious prince, greatly observant of the ceremonies of the Jewish religion. If this was the case, he was probably led by his Jewish prejudices to persecute Christianity.

2. The early martyrdom of St. James, was no doubt an instructive lesson to the apostolic college, by shewing them, that the miraculous powers, with which they were endowed, could not secure them from the malice of their enemies.

after

after the ensuing passover: For the deliverance of this great apostle, the church made constant prayers to God; which it pleased the Almighty to answer. For as Peter, the very night before Herod intended to put him to death, was sleeping between two soldiers, who guarded him; an angel appeared in heavenly brightness, and awaking him, bad him rise. His chains immediately falling from his hands, he threw his mantle about him, and followed the angel; scarce knowing, whether he were yet awake. Under this divine conduct, he passed securely through all the guards; and came to the large iron-gate, which led into the city. This opened of it's own accord; and as they were now in the street, the angel left him.—Peter come intirely to himself; and conceiving fully the gracious deliverance he had received, went to the house of a religious woman of the name of Mary, the mother of Mark, where many pious Christians were then assembled at prayer.—On Peter's knocking, a young woman went to the gate; but instead of opening it, on knowing his voice, she ran with joy to inform the

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6. Four quaternions of soldiers were sixteen; four of whom watched by turns; and the apostle was chained to two of these, according to the Roman custom.

13. It was common among the Jews, to give the names of plants, and flowers, to their female children. Rhoda signifies a rose; Tamâr, a palm; Edeffa, a myrtle; Sufannah, a lily. Sometimes they would give the names of animals also: as Tabitha, and Dorcas, signify in Hebrew, and Greek, a goat, or roe.

family :

15. family: but they paying little regard to her at first,
 16. were above measure astonished, on finding it was
 17. really Peter himself.—The apostle then related to
 them the circumstances of his great deliverance;
 and desiring them to inform his brethren; retired
 himself to a place of security.
18. 19. In the morning there was great confusion among
 the soldiers; and tho Herod, on examining the case,
 could find no circumstances of neglect, he ordered
 20. the whole guard to be put to death.—But that
 wicked prince knew not how soon his own end was
 approaching. From Judea he went to Cæsarea;
 21. where the Tyrians, fearing his displeasure, had sent
 ambassadors to pacify him. On a set day he gave
 them audience; and being magnificently arrayed,
 22. he made a solemn oration, which was received, as if
 23. it had come from a God. For his pride, cruelty,

15. The text says, they supposed it was ο αγγελος αυτου. Some imagine they meant, what we call in English, his *ghost*: others his *guardian angel*: others only a *messenger*, from him.

17. It is James the less, who is mentioned here: James, the son of Zebedee, had been put to death.

20. *Because their country was nourished by the king's country.* The Tyrians, who were intirely a trading people, neglected agriculture; and received their chief supplies of corn from Judea.

22. We have the same account from Josephus; with many other circumstances; but none that differ materially from these. Antiq. lib. XIX. ch. viii. What St. Luke calls *royal apparel*, Josephus tells us, was a robe of silver tissue, most curiously wrought; on which the rays of the sun shining, as he sat on his throne, exalted above the people, gave him a most splendid, and dazzling appearance.

and

and other sins, he was struck by the hand of the Almighty with a terrible disease, which put an end to his life.—The gospel however was only the more confirmed by the opposition he had given it.

24.

CHAP.
XIII.

1.

In the mean time Barnabas, and Saul, having delivered the contributions, which had been intrusted to them from Antioch, returned thither again; where they found the Christian church considerably increased.—Besides these two great apostles, three others of singular eminence presided over it, at that time; Simeon, who was surnamed Niger; and Lucius of Cyrene; and Manaen, who had been the friend of Herod; but having given up his connections with that prince, had embraced the Christian religion.

Saul, and Barnabas had not long been at Antioch; before they were ordered by the particular designation of the Holy Spirit to leave that city, and preach the gospel in other parts; and a solemn day of fasting, and prayer was appointed to supplicate God for their success. Under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, therefore they went to Seleucia, tak-

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4. 5.

23. Put an end to his life—or as it is expressed in the figurative language of scripture; *The angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory.* The pride of heart which made him assume divine powers to himself, was the *particular* crime here laid to his charge: but he was probably a wicked prince in many other respects, notwithstanding the account of Josephus.

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ing Mark with them, as their assistant. From Seleucia they sailed to Cyprus; and beginning at Salamis, they preached the gospel in the Jewish synagogues through the whole island as far as Paphos.

6. 7. 8.

—At Paphos resided a Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a well-disposed man; who hearing of the two apostles, sent for them, and desired them to give him some account of the new religion they taught. In the family of the proconsul lived a Jewish magician of the name of Elymas; who being jealous of the apostles, endeavoured to prevent the proconsul's paying any attention to them. On this, Saul, (who

9.

took also the name of Paul) turning to him with that dignity, which the Holy Spirit inspired, rebuked his subtil and mischievous opposition to a doctrine, the purity, and evidence of which he could not but acknowledge. He then told him, that as he had voluntarily suffered his understanding to be thus darkened, God would punish him, for a time at least, with the loss of his eyes. On this a darkness fell immediately on him; and he discovered by stretching out his hands, and seeking for somebody to lead him, that he was utterly deprived of sight.

10. 11.

9. Some writers think the apostle took the name of Paul, in compliment to Sergius Paulus, his first Gentile convert. Others suppose, that it was only the name he was generally known by, among the Greeks, and Romans; as John in England, is Jean in France, and Hans in Holland. And this is most probable. See Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebr. and Talm.* p. 739; where it appears the Jews, out of Judea, commonly took other names.

The

The proconsul, impressed with the doctrine of Paul, and struck with this great miracle, immediately professed himself a Christian.

The two apostles soon after, leaving Paphos, went to Perga, in Pamphylia; where Mark left them; chusing rather to go to Jerusalem.—From Perga they continued their journey to Antioch in Pisidia. Here they went to the synagogue on the sabbath-day; and after the reading of the law, and the prophets, being asked by the rulers of the synagogue, if they had any thing to say to the people; Paul desired their attention with the motion of his hand; and addressing himself to the Jews in particular; and to all in general, who believed in the true God, took occasion from the sacred books, which had just been read to them, to recapitulate in few words, the Jewish history, in order to deduce the Messiah from David, according to God's constant promises to that prince; reminding them, at the same time, of the miraculous manner, in which Christ had been introduced by John the Baptist; whose testimony of Jesus's dignity, and of his own inferiority, was equally full.—The apostle then recommended earnestly to their serious attention,

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13. The reason of Mark's leaving Paul, at this time, is nowhere given. It is certain, that Paul was much offended at it. See Acts xv. 38.

14. To distinguish it from *Antioch in Syria*, from whence they had come.

15. The rulers of the synagogue were authorized to allow whom they pleased, to preach.

the

- the gracious offer of salvation through the gospel.
27. 28. 29. He mentioned the circumstances of Jesus's death; and shewed, that all the malice of his enemies against him, was only a direct completion of the predictions of the prophets. He adverted next to his glorious resurrection; which was proved by many of his followers, who saw him alive, and attended him through a course of several days.—Thus, said he, we have opened to you those gracious promises made to our fathers, which God hath now fulfilled in sending Jesus Christ into the world; according to the prophecy of David, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*—And as to that great event, his resurrection from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, *I will give you, said God, the sure mercies of David: thou shalt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption.* This prophecy, he told them, alluded to the resurrection of the Messiah. Of David no prophecy of this kind could be spoken. He saw corruption; and so did every one, except Jesus, who had been raised from the dead. They all died again, and saw corruption.—Paul having proved Jesus to be the Messiah; proceeded to point out his office. He came, said he, to offer remission of

33. Most interpreters consider the *raising up* of Jesus in this verse as spoken of his *resurrection*: but the context, and application of the prophecy rather give the sense of Christ's *being raised from the seed of David*. See Ps. ii. 7—Isa. lv. 3—Ps. xvi. 10.

34. *The sure mercies of David*, is taken from Isa. lv. 3, and is only a sort of proverbial mode of expressing *security*.

sins to man through faith, and repentance; and to
 make that effectual atonement for him, which the
 expiatory sacrifices of the law could not make.— 39.
 Lastly, the apostle warned his audience not to be 40. 41.
 found in the number of those, whom the prophet
 threatened with destruction; if they refused this
 gracious offer, and rejected a dispensation so clearly
 proved, as this certainly was.

After the apostle had ended his discourse (which 42. 43.
 had been heard with great attention) the synagogue
 broke up; and many of the Gentiles, as they left
 the place, desired to hear the same discourse on the
 next sabbath: while Paul earnestly exhorted several
 of the Jews, and proselyte-Gentiles, who had been
 convinced by what they had heard, and professed
 themselves Christians, to continue stedfast in the faith.

On the next sabbath-day, almost the whole city 44.
 met together, to attend the apostle. But the unbe- 45.
 lieving Jews, of whom there were many in those
 parts, being jealous of his popularity, had now
 drawn together a party; and mixing with the au-
 dience, interrupted Paul's discourse, and turned the
 whole city into a scene of confusion.—The apostle, 46. 47.
 with great plainness, told them, that it was necessary

41. The prophecy, to which St. Paul alludes, is contained in
 Hab. i. 5. where the prophet threatens the people with the Baby-
 lonish captivity. St. Paul's *immediate* reference seems to be to the
 destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; but he seems also, like
 our Saviour, to refer to the next life.

47. The prophecy, to which St. Paul particularly refers, is
 Isa. xlix. 6.

for the gospel first to be preached to them; but as they had hardened themselves against it, it should now, according to the predictions of the prophets, be offered to the Gentiles.——When the Gentiles heard this, they glorified God; and as many, as were well-disposed, believed the gospel; which began now to spread through all the country.

This success still farther enraged the Jews; who stirring up all whom they could influence, raised such an opposition against Paul, and Barnabas, as obliged them to leave the place. Giving up therefore these infidel Jews to the judgment of God by the ceremony of shaking off the dust of their feet against them†, they bore the persecution they had received with holy joy; and retired to Iconium.——God did not however desert the church, which had been thus planted in Pisidia: but watched over it, and replenished it with his Holy Spirit.

CHAP.
XIV.

1. 2. 3.

4.

At Iconium the apostles preached in the synagogue; and had, at first, great success. They performed many miracles also in testimony of their doctrine; and numbers both of Jews, and Greeks professed the faith.——But here also the unbelieving Jews followed the example of those in Pisidia; and made it their business to form a party against the

48. the word *ταρτω* in the original, may well signify *disposed*, or *prepared for*; but the translators of our English Testament, give many words a predestinarian sense, which there is no reason for.

† See a note on Matt. x. 14.

progress of the gospel. Afterwards gaining the magistrates on their side, they laid a scheme to seize the two apostles, and put them to death. But they being aware of the design, fled to Lystra, a city of Lycaonia; and preached the gospel sometimes there; and sometimes at Derbe, and other places, in that neighbourhood.

It fell out, as Paul was preaching at the former of these towns, that a person, who had been lame from his birth, was among his hearers; and the apostle perceiving he had faith to be healed, bad him stand upright on his feet; on which he became instantly sound.—When the inhabitants of Lystra saw this, they ran about the city, crying out, that the Gods were come down among them; calling Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because they observed he was the principal speaker. Nay to such a height did their zealous phrenzy carry them, that the priest of Jupiter began to make preparations for a solemn sacrifice to them.—When the two apostles, Paul, and Barnabas, heard this, they rent their

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11. It was very agreeable to the heathen creed, that the Gods should visit the lower world. Even Tully tells us, the Gods must have a human form, as they never appeared in any other. De Nat. Deorum.

13. *Jupiter, which was before their city:* that is, whose statue stood at the entrance of their city.—*Brought oxen and garlands:* that is, brought oxen crowned with garlands.

Victima labe carens, et præstantissima formâ
Sistitur ante aras, vittis insignis, et auro.

Ovid's Met.

15. cloaths, and ran in among the people, crying out
"What mean you by this? We are men like your-
selves: and are so far from suffering any devotion to
be paid to us, that it is the great end of our doc-
trine to call men from the worship of false Gods,
16. and teach them to acknowledge one only God, who
made heaven, and earth, and all things therein; and
17. who amidst all the blindness, that hath overspread
the world, hath always given sufficient evidence of
his divine nature, in the works of creation, to recall
mankind from the absurdity of worshipping idols."
18. —Even with this language they were scarce able to
repress the zeal of the people.

19. This popular favour however soon took another
turn. The unbelieving Jews from Pisidia, and Ico-
nium, coming hither also, infused their spirit into
the inhabitants of Lystra; and a tumult being raised,
Paul was seized, and carried out of the city; where
20. he was stoned, and left as dead. By the assistance
however of his friends he revived; and retired, the
next day, with Barnabas to Derbe.

21. Here too the apostles preached the gospel, and con-
verted many to the Christian faith. They afterwards
returned to Lystra, and Iconium, and Antioch in
22. Pisidia; where they confirmed the converts they had

20. Some interpret this as a miraculous resurrection from the dead. I think it rather appears otherwise, from the conclusion of the 19th verse, *supposing he had been dead*. See also 2 Cor. xi. 25, where this fact is referred to, among other sufferings short of death.

made; and exhorted them to continue stedfast in the faith; notwithstanding those persecutions, which (they saw) had arisen, and must necessarily arise again.—Then, after solemn prayer, and fasting, ordaining elders to preside over the several churches; and recommending them to the grace of God, they passed through Pisidia, and Pamphilia; and continuing some time at Perga, they went to Attalia; and from that city by sea to Antioch in Syria, from whence, about two years before, they had set out.—On their arrival there, they called an assembly of the church; and gave them an account of God's gracious dealings through their ministry; and shewed them, that a door was now fully opened for the gospel among the Gentiles.—After this circuit through different parts of Asia minor, they continued sometime with the disciples at Antioch.

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25. 26.

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CHAP.
XV.

1.

2.

The first thing that disturbed the peace of the church of Antioch, was an opinion introduced by certain judaizing Christians from Jerusalem, with regard to circumcision; which they thought all Christians were *obliged* to receive.—This opinion was opposed by Paul, and Barnabas, with great warmth. But when they could not suppress it by their own authority; it was determined, that those two apostles, with some others, should consult the

23. These elders seem to be considered next in dignity to the apostles. Their office appears to be described Acts xx. 28.

3. church at Jerusalem. In their way thither, through
 4. Phoenicia, and Samaria, they occasioned great joy
 among all Christians by the accounts they gave of
 the conversion of the Gentiles.—When they ar-
 5. rived at Jerusalem, they acquainted the apostles,
 and elders, with all the transactions of the church
 at Antioch: and then informed them of the dissen-
 6. sion which had been introduced by some judaizing
 Christians, of the sect of the Pharisees, with regard
 to circumcision, and other points of the law of
 Moses. This question the apostles, and elders,
 7. resolved to examine in a full assembly; which they
 accordingly called. As in this assembly there were
 many Christians, who were strenuous upholders of
 the law of Moses, the question was agitated with
 some warmth on both sides. The great advocate
 for the full liberty of the Christian converts, was
 Peter. He put the assembly in mind of the case
 of Cornelius; of whom circumcision had not been
 8. 9. required. He dwelt on the descent of the Holy
 Ghost on several Gentile converts; which was argu-
 ment sufficient, that God had fully accepted them
 without circumcision; alledging that their hearts
 were purified, not by the ceremonies of the law,
 10. but by faith alone. Why therefore, said he, do

4. This seems to be that journey to Jerusalem of which Paul speaks Gal. ii. 1.

4. There should only be a comma, or semicolon after this verse, as it is plain the 5th verse is a continuation of what the two apostles from Antioch related.

you go about to put a yoke on the necks of the Gentile-Christians, which neither we, nor our fathers were able to bear? We believe that we, the Jews, cannot be saved, but through the gospel; why should we then make the Gentiles consider the observance of this rite *necessary*, which in our own case we acknowledge to be ineffectual?—Peter's speech was seconded by Paul, and Barnabas, who informed the assembly, that God's dealings with such of the Gentiles, as they had converted, were exactly similar to the account, which Peter had just given them.

11.

12.

When they had all spoken their sentiments, James stood up, and said; "Peter hath just explained to you the circumstances, which attended the first conversion of the Gentiles—a conversion directed by the immediate interposition of God. And if you examine the prophets you will find them all speaking the same language. No mention is made of the

13. 14.

15. 16. 17.

10. Some interpreters leave *Θεοι* out of this sentence; as it is not found in some of the best MSS; and tends only to embarrass the sense. The expression then is, *Why do you attempt, or endeavour to put, &c.* *Περὶ αὐτοῦ* however in this sense, is not often, I believe, used with an accusative.

13. 19. James says, *Men and brethren hearken unto me—my sentence is.* It is well Peter did not say this; it had been a good argument for the supremacy of the Pope.

17. The text quoted here is Amos ix. 11, 12. I have given what appears to be the sense of it; and what agrees with the apostle's argument. But we do not find this text with any exactness in our vulgar translation of the bible. The apostle has evidently quoted from the LXX; which differs a little from our translation; but agrees exactly with the apostle.

18. covenant of circumcision; but that the defection of
 the house of Israel should be restored by calling in
 all the nations of the earth to worship God in
 holiness, and righteousness of life. From the be-
 19. ginning, no doubt, God respected all things; and
 would certainly have enjoined circumcision, if it
 20. had been necessary. I see no reason therefore to
 make the Gentiles conform to it.—And yet it
 may be proper to enjoin them to abstain from some
 things, which give great offence to the Jews; as in
 any degree partaking of idol-meats; which will be
 considered as a kind of spiritual fornication; and
 21. from the use of blood: and this prohibition should
 be the more general, as there are few towns, where
 there are any Christian-converts, in which the Jew-
 ish religion is not exercised.”†

This

† This whole passage is acknowledged, on all hands, to be a difficult one.—The first question, that arises, is, whether the prohibition of blood, is meant as a *general*, or as an *occasional* precept? Many things have been said with much force on both sides of the question. I know no writer, who has drawn up the arguments for it's being a precept of *general observation*, in stronger array, than Mr. Stackhouse: yet still, I think, the mind revolts from this idea, when we consider the liberal principles of the Christian religion—so little affected by outward observances—and so wholly delighting in inward purity—when we consider what a number of passages in scripture, mention the heart only as the receptacle of virtue and vice—when we reflect, that our Saviour says, nothing entering the mouth, defileth the man; and St. Paul, that we may eat any thing set before us, asking no questions for conscience sake—and when we consider lastly, that the prohibition of eating blood, is not seconded by one single text of a similar kind, throughout the whole New Testament. If it had been meant as a general precept, we might certainly have expected to see it confirmed by other passages; or,
 at

This opinion of James being agreeable to the whole assembly, they resolved to send two persons of great eminence from their own body, Judas, and Silas, together with Paul, and Barnabas, to the church of Antioch, with the apostolic decree, which was to this effect. 22. 23.

at least, secured against mistake in those passages, which seem so directly to oppose it.—The next question relates to the word *πορνεία*. If it literally mean *fornication*, how comes it to be joined to mere *occasional* precepts? They indeed who contend for the literal sense, have nothing of *much weight* to say in answer to this question. It is, I think, therefore the best interpretation, and liable to the fewest objections, to suppose *πορνεία* means *spiritual fornication*; as it is often indeed used in scripture. See Rev. ii. 20. xiv. 8. xvii. 2, 4. xviii. 3. xix. 2. See also Parkhurst's lexicon.—Others to get rid of the difficulty, for *πορνεία* read *χοιραια*, to abstain from *swine's flesh*; but this, I believe, rests on no authority.—The last difficulty of this passage relates to the 21st verse; *For Moses, in old time, hath in every city, them that preach him; being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.*—Some explain this passage, as if the apostle had said, *We need not mention these things to the Jews, because, as they constantly read the books of Moses, they are perfectly acquainted with them.* But this seems to have nothing to do with the *intention of the decree*; which is so far from endeavouring to rectify the opinions of the Jews, that it is not even addressed to them. It is addressed only to *them which from among the Gentiles were turned to God.* The intention therefore of this passage seems to be, as I have endeavoured to explain it, that wherever the Jews, and Christians were found together, this decree should be carried, and presented to the Gentiles; in order to prevent that offence, which might otherwise be given to the Jews.—One thing more, with regard to this text, may be observed, which is, that the words *καὶ τὰ πικρὰ* are omitted in many MSS; and universally unknown to the Latin fathers, who leave them intirely out in all their quotations. And indeed the words seem of no use in the text; for the only reason for abstaining from *things strangled*, is, that the blood might not be eaten with the flesh.

24. "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain persons of our assembly going over to you, have, without any authority from us, pretended to lay you under an injunction to be circumcised, and to
 25. 26. 27. observe the Mosaic law—it hath seemed good to us assembled in council, to send Judas, and Silas, together with our beloved Paul, and Barnabas, who have hazarded their lives for the gospel, to inform
 28. 29. you, that, agreeably to the sense of the Holy Spirit, we think proper to lay nothing upon you, but (what we think, at present, necessary) to abstain from meats offered to idols, which will be thought a kind of spiritual fornication; and from the use of blood; from which if you keep yourselves, you will avoid giving offence. Fare you well."

30. 31. 32. This decree being read to the church of Antioch, occasioned great joy; to which Judas, and Silas contributed

28. *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us—that is, it was agreeable to the sense of the Holy Spirit, as declared in the case of Cornelius, &c.—that the Gentiles need not be circumcised in order to become Christians. The council does not seem to assert, that the Holy Ghost immediately directed this decree. If it had, there would have been no occasion for any reasoning about the matter.—These necessary things, says the text. In some copies we have a different reading; which may be rendered, these things which are, at this time, necessary.*

29. It is worth while to compare the mildness of the conclusion of this decree, (*from which if you keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well;*) with the anathemas which used commonly to conclude the decrees of popes, and councils.

32. Judas, and Silas are here called *prophets*. The word *προφήτης* sometimes signifies a person, *who speaks for another*; as a teacher

contributed not a little; confirming by their own private exhortations, the authority of the church of Jerusalem.—Some time after, Judas returned again into Judea; but Silas chose to stay longer at Antioch; where Paul also, and Barnabas continued, with many others; all uniting in the great work of preaching the gospel.

Paul having now been a considerable time at Antioch, proposed to Barnabas, to make another circuit among the several churches, which they had established. Barnabas closing with the proposal, mentioned Mark, as a proper person to take with them; which Paul would by no means consent to, as he had left them so abruptly at Pamphilia. This drew on so sharp a contention between these two apostles, that they separated. Barnabas taking Mark, who was his nephew†, embarked for Cyprus; while

teacher in an assembly, may be called a prophet; or, as Aaron was called Moses's prophet. It is not clear in what sense Judas, and Silas are here called *prophets*: but it seems rather probable, that they are called so, as speaking the sense of the church at Jerusalem.

38. See chap. xiii. 13.

39. Here is an eminent example of imperfection in these great apostles. Mark had probably been much to blame in leaving Paul; and Paul perhaps now as much in resenting it so strongly: and both he, and Barnabas, in making a formal quarrel. They discovered plainly, as they had told the people of Lystra, that *they were men of like passions with themselves*. Paul however was afterwards perfectly reconciled to Mark: and speaks of him, as one of his great comforts in his labours. See Col. iv. 11.

† See Col. iv. 10.

Paul

Paul accompanied by Silas, and attended by the prayers of the church, took the circuit he had proposed, through Syria, and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

CHAP.
XVI.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

At Lystra he found a young convert of eminent piety, of the name of Timothy; whose mother was a Jewish Christian: and thinking him a proper person to be the companion of his labours, he complied so far with the prejudices of the Jews in those parts, as to circumcise him; for they all knew, that his father was a Greek. Having added this young convert to his company, Paul proceeded to the several cities, which he meant to visit: and removed their scruples; by giving them copies of the decree, which the apostolic assembly had made at Jerusalem.

3. Tho it is evident enough, that Paul did not circumcise Timothy from any religious principle, but merely in compliance with the prejudices of the Jews; yet it must be owned, there was something rather singular in his doing it just at that critical time, when he himself was carrying a decree against circumcision. The fact seems to be, that circumcision was generally allowed to Jews. Timothy was circumcised, because his mother was of Jewish extraction: but the same apostle who allowed this, forbade Titus to conform to this ceremony, because he was a Greek. Indeed none of the apostles seem to have had any objection to circumcision in *itself*: but only as it was imposed under the idea of being *necessary to salvation*. And Paul does no more here, than what he approves elsewhere: *to the Jews became I a Jew, that I might gain the Jews.* 1 Cor. ix. 20.

4. It is a good observation of L'Enfant that the word *δογμα*, which is here translated a *decree*, always signifies something temporary, and ceremonial; and not of perpetual obligation.—Lord Barrington (in his Miscell. fac.) supposes that the text is here disturbed; and that this verse, and the next, should be added to the last of the XVth chapter. This is certainly a more natural order, and introduces the account of Timothy more easily.

Having

Having passed through several parts of Asia, where the gospel had already been planted, he determined to go into some other provinces, where it had not yet been preached: but in this design he was over-ruled by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and went to Troas.—Here he was directed by a vision from heaven, to visit Macedonia; and accordingly he, and his companions, of whom Luke was one, took the nearest way to Philippi, the chief city of that part of the country.—At Philippi the Jews were allowed a place of worship at a little distance from the city, near the side of a river. Here therefore Paul resorted on the sabbath day, and found chiefly religious women; among whom one Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, a dealer in purple, being convinced by Paul's arguments, was baptized with all her family; and intreated him, and his company to lodge at her house.

There was at that time, at Philippi, a young woman, possessed with an evil spirit, who afforded gain, by her divinations, to some people, who em-

6. 7. It does not absolutely appear from the text, that the gospel had not been preached in Asia, and Bithinia; tho it seems probable, the people of those countries might not be yet prepared for it; or there might be other reasons, why Macedonia was at this time preferable.

10. In this verse St. Luke first alludes to himself. But of whatever use he might be in these journeys to the Christian cause, he passes all over in modest silence.

13. Dr. Lardner shews, that it was very usual for the Jews, in foreign countries to have houses of prayer allowed by the sides of rivers, or on the sea-shore. See his Credib. part I. ch. iii.

ployed

17. played her. This demoniac followed Paul, and his company, as they went to the synagogue, crying out, These are the servants of the most high God, who shew us the way of salvation. On this, Paul ordering the evil spirit to leave her, she was perfectly restored.—Her employers thus finding the hopes of all farther gain disappointed, seized Paul, and Silas, and dragging them before the magistrates, accused them of disturbing the peace of the city; and of introducing new rites, and customs, which were contrary to those already established. The tumult increasing, the magistrates ordered them to be scourged, and thrown into prison; with a strict command to the jailor, to keep them safely.—But at midnight, as Paul, and Silas were singing praises to God, an earthquake suddenly shook the foundations of the prison; and burst open all the gates. —The keeper awakened by the noise, and finding all laid open, took it for granted, the prisoners were fled; and drawing his sword, was going to kill himself: when Paul, seeing his frantic action, with a loud voice cried out, Do yourself no harm; we are all here. On this the keeper calling for a light,

17. The demoniacs, during the life of our blessed Saviour, always acknowledged his power—on what principle we are unacquainted—perhaps through flattery. See Mar. i. 24, 34. Luke iv. 34. Acts xix. 15.

23. This, and another instance at Ephesus (chap. xix.) are the only instances of persecution, which St. Paul suffered from the *beathen*; and both were on interested, rather than on religious motives.

was struck with the composure of Paul, and Silas, in the midst of this terrible convulsion; and comparing the greatness of their behaviour, with the miracle of the demoniac, he was convinced of their divine power; and falling down before them, he brought them into his house, and asked them with great emotion, What he should do to be saved? The apostle, explaining the terms of the gospel, held out to him, a belief in Jesus Christ.—The keeper then washing their stripes, and refreshing them, received baptism himself, with his whole family; who all joined in praising God for his gracious mercies to them.

The next day the magistrates, somewhat ashamed of their hasty proceedings, sent privately to the keeper of the prison, to dismiss the two men, who had been committed to his charge. This message the keeper, with much joy, imparted to the apostles. But Paul, with great spirit, said, they were Roman citizens, and had been used in a manner, in which no Roman citizen ought to be used. What? said he, shall they beat, and imprison us uncondemned; and then privately dismiss us? Let them come themselves, and make an apology for what they have done.—The magistrates on hearing they were Roman citizens, were much alarmed; and coming to the prison, intreated them quietly to leave the city.—They stayed however some little time at the house of Lydia, comforting their friends;

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CHAP.
XVII.

1.

and then leaving Philippi, went through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, to Thessalonica, the principal city of Macedonia.

2. 3.

At Thessalonica also the Jews were allowed a synagogue; in which Paul, during three sabbath-days, explained the principles of the Christian religion; proving from the prophecies of the Old Testament, that, *that* Jesus, whom he preached, having both suffered, and risen from the dead, must needs be the Christ, whom those prophecies pointed out. This doctrine had such effect, that a great

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multitude of Greeks; and many of the Jews also believed.—But the success of the apostles soon

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raised a party of unbelieving Jews against them; who getting together a number of disorderly people, attacked the house of Jason, where they lodged;

6. 7.

and not being able to find the apostles, who had escaped, they carried Jason, and some other Christians, whom they met with, before the magistrates, and informed them of the great irregularities, which these people had committed in other places, as well as at Thessalonica; setting up, as they said, in opposition to the Roman authority, a certain king

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of the name of Jesus. They then laid an information against Jason for harbouring such seditious persons. This violent charge, put the magistrates under some difficulty. They saw the frivolousness

9.

of it: at the same time they could not intirely neglect it. So they took security of Jason, and of the others, and dismissed them.

Paul,

Paul, and Silas, in the mean time, had been sent privately to Berea; where with the same freedom, which they had used at Thessalonica, they went into the Jewish synagogue, and preached. Here the Jews were much better disposed, than at Thessalonica: for they were at the pains of searching the scriptures, and comparing them with the doctrines, which Paul preached. Many of them after this examination, believed; and many Greeks likewise of both sexes.

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12.

But when the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica had heard of the ready acceptance, which the Bereans had given to the gospel, they came to Berea, and excited the people there against the apostles. As Paul was the most obnoxious person, he thought it prudent to avoid their fury; and going to the seaside, as if he had intended to embark; he went to Athens; sending orders to Silas, and Timothy to follow him there.

13.

14. 15.

While Paul waited at Athens for his companions, he was grieved to see a city, so celebrated for learning, addicted, in so gross a manner, to idolatry. He took every opportunity therefore of reasoning both with the Jews in their synagogues; and with

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17.

13. The word *σαλευω* which is translated *stirred up*, expresses properly that kind of agitated motion, which is given to the sea in a storm; and admirably describes the raging of a popular tumult.

16. Petronius, who lived about the time of St. Paul, says, that at Athens, *Facilius possis Deum, quam hominem, invenire.*

the Athenians, whom he accidentally met in public places.—As Athens was at that time, the school of philosophy, the apostle began soon to excite attention; and some Epicurean, and Stoic philosophers, partly in contempt, and partly through curiosity (for the Athenians were a very inquisitive people) brought him into their public assemblies, and desired to know, what that new, and uncommonly strange doctrine was, which he had advanced? alluding to what Paul had said, with regard to the resurrection.

On this opening, Paul began by telling them, how much he thought their minds under the influence of

21. This character is given of the Athenians both by Demosthenes, and Thucydides.

22. Dr. Lardner contends, and I think with great justice, that *δεισιδαιμονιστες* should be taken in a good sense, and not rendered *superstitious*. (See Credib. vol. I. p. 193 in a note). St. Paul shewed, at all times, great delicacy towards the opinions of others; and plainly at this time, did not mean to give any offence to the Athenians.

23. Diogenes Laertius in his life of Epimenides (lib. I. page 29) tells us, that the Athenians, being afflicted with a pestilence, invited Epimenides to lustrate their city. The method he took, was to carry several sheep to the Areopagus; from whence they were left to wander as they pleased, under the observation of people sent to attend them. As each sheep lay down, it was sacrificed, on the spot, to the propitious God. By this ceremony the city was relieved. But it was still unknown, what God was propitious. An altar therefore was erected at every place, where a sheep had been sacrificed, to the unknown God.

23. With what great address the apostle turns the superstition of the Athenians against themselves!—He also makes an admirable apology for himself. He had been accused of setting forth strange Gods—to which charge he answers, that he found among them an altar inscribed to the unknown God.—Longinus, in a fragment,

of a strong sense of religion. Not content, said he, with the variety of Gods you worship, I met with an altar inscribed TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. This proves however that there is a God, whom you allow you do not know. That God I now preach unto you—the Creator of all things—the Lord of heaven and earth—who is not confined to human temples—nor in want of sacrifice, or any thing, which human power can supply; insomuch as every thing derives it's existence, and preservation from him. This great God is the common father of all mankind; whose several nations he hath distributed over the face of the earth, according to his own good pleasure; and hath required them all to acknowledge, and worship him, from a just sense of their dependence on him, for every blessing they enjoy—their life—their breath—and very existence. The apostle then quoted a passage from Aratus, in which that poet calls mankind *the offspring of God*. If, continued he, we are the offspring of God, let us consider, in what light we are called so. It is in our minds, not in our bodies, that we resemble him. We must not therefore think that images of gold, and silver are any representations of the deity.—Thus far however God hath born with the ignorance

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a fragment, mentions Paul of Tarsus, among the orators of his time. See Jortin's serm. Vol. IV. p. 221.

28. Aratus was a Cilician poet; the countryman of Paul. Nearly the same expression is found in Cleanthes's hymn to Jupiter. See Hen. Step. poet. philos. p. 49.

31. of mankind. But now he hath revealed his will to them explicitly; and commands them every where to repent; and prepare themselves for that awful time, when he will call them all into judgment, before Jesus Christ, the redeemer of the world; of whose divine authority he gave sufficient evidence by raising him from the dead.

32. This discourse, especially the latter part of it, with regard to the resurrection of the dead, affected this assembly of philosophers in different ways. The Epicureans treated it with great contempt: while the Stoics thinking there was something plausible in the notion, desired they might hear the apostle on the same subject again.—Before he left Athens how-

33. 34.

CHAP.
XVIII.

1. 2.

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From Athens Paul went to Corinth: and finding there a Christian Jew, of the name of Aquila, who had been driven from Rome, with all his countrymen, by a decree of the emperor Claudius; he abode

2. Suetonius tells us, in the life of Claudius, that, that Emperor, *Judeos, impulsore Christo, assidue tumultuantes, Roma expulit.*

3. It may appear a little singular, that Paul, who was brought up in a learned profession, should be a tent-maker: but we must consider, that the Jews of all conditions taught their children some mechanic business. It was a common saying among them, *that he who taught his son no business, bred him a thief.*—The same custom still prevails in the east. Even the Grand Seignior himself is always taught some mechanic art. Sir Paul Ricaut tells us, that the Grand Seignior, to whom he went ambassador, had learned to make wooden spoons.

with him; and as Aquila, and he were both tent-makers, they wrought together. On the sabbath-days Paul taught in the synagogue, applying himself chiefly to the Jews, and profelytes.—Afterwards, when Silas, and Timothy joined him from Macedonia, they all united in the most earnest application to the Jews; endeavouring to convince them from the prophets; that Jesus was certainly the Messiah. —But their zealous endeavours were received with so hardened an opposition, that Paul finding it to no purpose to continue among them, gathered up his garment, and shaking it out, accompanied that significant action by telling them, he now gave them up—they must take their guilt upon themselves—he would turn to the Gentiles. And from this time he preached no more in the synagogue, but in the house of one Justus, who lived near it.—Notwithstanding however this violent opposition from the Jews, Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed; and a great number of Corinthians.

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9. 10.

As Paul was now about to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and must therefore expect to irritate the Jews still more, it pleased God to give him the comfort of a heavenly vision, in which he was or-

6. It is rendered in our translation, *he shook his raiment*; which implies a degree of passion, and violence, unbecoming the apostolical character. I have given it another interpretation, led by the word *ἐκτινασσω*, which literally signifies, *to shake from, or shake out of*. The action seems to be merely symbolical, and by no means passionate. The story of the Roman ambassador, who *shook war from his gown*, will be remembered.

- dered to continue where he was, amidst a well-disposed people—to preach the truth boldly—and to trust in the protection of heaven.—On the authority of this vision Paul continued a year, and a half longer at Corinth, preaching the gospel; and met with no opposition, till Gallio was appointed proconsul of Achaia; whom the Jews hoped to interest in their favour. With this view, they brought Paul before him in a tumultuary manner; accusing him of introducing a new mode of worship. But Gallio immediately comprehending the whole affair, told the Jews plainly, that if it were a matter of right, and wrong, he would readily enter into it: but as he saw it was a question with regard to ceremonies, and points of religion, of which he was no judge; he gave them to understand, he should never trouble himself about such matters; and ordered them immediately to leave the court.—Imboldened by this, the Greeks, who favoured Paul, took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, who had been the chief mover in the affair, and beat him on the spot: while Gallio, thinking probably it was a

12. It is remarkable, that Gallio was the brother of the philosopher Seneca; and is described by him as a man of the sweetest disposition. Statius mentions him also in the same amiable light.

17. They beat him perhaps not in the court room; but as he left it.—It is however rather doubtful, whether Sosthenes was not St. Paul's friend: see 1 Cor. i. 1. The relation is accompanied with so few circumstances, that it is difficult to collect the real fact. There is a various reading which places *οι Ιουδαίοι* in the room of *οι Έλληνες*. If this should be the true one, it gives a different sense to the passage.

punishment

punishment he well deserved, took no notice of the impropriety of the action.

After this, Paul continued sometime longer at Corinth; and then went into Syria, accompanied by Aquila, and his wife Priscilla; having first shaven his head at Cenchrea, as a testimony that he had finished a vow, in which he had engaged.

18.

At Ephesus he found a synagogue, where he preached; and was so well received by the Jews there, that he was much pressed to stay longer: but he thought himself under a necessity to keep the ensuing feast at Jerusalem. He left however Aquila, and Priscilla with them, till his return; and then embarking at Ephesus, he landed at Cæsarea; and went to Jerusalem, where he had a conference with the apostles; and from thence went to Antioch in Syria.—There he spent some time; and then visited the several churches of Galatia, and Phrygia, exhorting the new converts to continue steadily in the faith they had professed.

19. 20. 21.

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18. Some imagine this to have been a Nazarite vow; and yet it does not correspond with the Levitical institution, which required the Nazarite to *shave his head at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*. Num. vi. 18.—It is commonly thought to have been a vow for some signal deliverance.

19. Ephesus was the principal city of proconsular Asia. It stood on the side of a hill, overlooking a beautiful and very extensive plain, watered by the river Caister.

21. Not from any principle of conscience; but probably because he might meet at Jerusalem a great concourse of Jews, and many of his own converts.

24. 25. 26. After Paul had left Ephesus, an Alexandrian Jew arrived there, named Apollos, who had been a disciple of John the Baptist. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the Hebrew scriptures; and preached the gospel, from such knowledge as he had, with great earnestness. Aquila, and Priscilla having heard him, and finding him not fully informed in the doctrines of the gospel, instructed him more perfectly. Afterwards, when he wished to preach the gospel in Achaia, the Ephesian church gave him letters of recommendation to the Christians there. In all that country his services were very eminent; for his eloquence and knowledge in the scriptures, were such, that he greatly convinced the Jews, from the prophetic writings, that Jesus was the Messiah.

CHAP.
XIX.

1. 2.

3.

4.

In the mean time Paul returned to Ephesus, as he had promised. Here he found some more of the disciples of John; and asked them, Whether they had received the Holy Ghost? To this they answered, they had heard of nothing particular on that subject. He then asked them, Whether they had been baptized in the Christian faith? and was informed they had received no baptism, but that of John. Paul then told them, that John's baptism engaged men

26. It is probable he was too much attached to Judaism.

2. It need not be supposed, they had never heard of the Holy Ghost, which their answer seems to imply; but having lived probably in some remote part, they had not heard of the late effusions, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. They might know only what John had occasionally said on that subject: see Mat. iii. 11—Mark i. 8—John i. 33.

only

only to repentance, till the appearing of the Messiah; but on that event it was expected, they should immediately be baptized into the Christian faith.—

On this they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; and Paul laying his hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost, with it's miraculous accompaniments of the spirit of prophecy, and speaking with tongues. The number of these disciples was about twelve.

Paul on his second visit to Ephesus, continued preaching freely in the synagogue about three months. But the Jews raising a violent party against him there, as they had done at Corinth; he separated himself, and his company, from them; and preached afterwards in the school of one Tyrannus. He continued however at Ephesus about two years longer; and had wonderful success, both among the Asiatic Jews, and the Gentiles; being enabled to perform miracles in a very extraordinary manner. He not only cured diseases by speaking a word; but even by sending garments to sick, and possessed people.

These miracles greatly raised the envy of the Jewish exorcists; who seeing Paul perform them in the name of Jesus, made an effort to perform them in the same manner. Seven sons particularly of Sceva, one of the chief priests, made the attempt. But the possessed man cried out, Jesus I know, and

13. See note on Matt. xii. 26.

16. Paul I know, but who are you? On this he made a furious attack upon them; and having terrified, and wounded them, put them all to flight. This shewed the power of the apostles over evil spirits so very eminently superior to that of the exorcists, that it drew over great multitudes to adore the name of Jesus. Nay it had such an effect upon people in general, that numbers, who had practised magical arts, came to the apostles, confessed their wicked impostures; and bringing their mischievous books, burnt them publicly; tho their value was very considerable.
21. Paul having thus settled a church at Ephesus, resolved now, under the influence of the Spirit, to go through Macedonia, and Achaia, to Jerusalem; and from thence to Rome. He sent Timothy therefore and Erastus before him into Macedonia to make some proper dispositions; and himself staid a while longer at Ephesus.
23. During this interval a violent commotion was stirred up against him.—In that city lived a certain artizan, named Demetrius, whose principal
24. 25. 26. 27.

19. Books were much more valuable before the invention of printing; and these might have been rendered more so by the many curious figures, and diagrams, which they might contain. If the pieces of silver were shekels at 2s. 4½d. each, the value would be about £5900. If they were denarii, at 7½d. each, the value would be about £1600.

24. These *silver shrines* are supposed to have been small temples, with the goddess in miniature, enshrined; which the devotees of Diana used to set up, as private objects of worship, in their houses. Some suppose them to have been medals.

occupation

occupation it was to make silver ornaments, used in the worship of Diana; by which himself, and many other craftsmen were enriched. This person calling together such as wrought in the same business, reminded them of the profit they had acquired by an employment now likely to be at an end, if Paul's doctrine against image-worship should be universally received. Of this, he told them, there was a great likelihood from the attention that had been paid to it, not only in that city, but in the greatest part of Asia. He bad them consider also, that not only their livelihood, but their religion itself was in danger.—This language threw the whole body of artizans into a ferment; and nothing was heard from every part of the croud; but voices crying out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!—The day, on which Demetrius had contrived this tumult, was the great festival-day of the goddess, when games were celebrated to her honour in the theatre. This set numbers of idle people at liberty; who being violently instigated against Paul, and not finding him, seized Gaius, and Aristarchus, two Macedonian converts, who had been seen with him; and hurried them into the theatre; with a view probably, if they had been suffered, of throwing them to the wild beasts.—Paul, hearing of this violence, was very desirous to enter the theatre, with an intention, if possible, to assuage the people: but neither the disciples, nor the principal magistrates,

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trates, who were his friends, would suffer him.
 32. In the mean time the tumult increased; and numbers had now joined it, who did not even know the cause of the disturbance; some crying one thing,
 33. and some another.—At this period of the tumult, the Jewish inhabitants of Ephesus, finding the multitude so divided in their aim; and fearing lest they too should suffer as Christians, drew Alexander through the croud, with a view, that he should explain that matter to the people. He stood up therefore, and beckoning with his hand, would have
 34. addressed them. But they finding he was a Jew, would not suffer him to speak; drowning his voice, with one general cry, from every part of the assembly, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!—In this
 35. situation of things, one of the magistrates rushed into the assembly; and by his presence reducing it a little to order, thus spoke.—“Is there any one, said he, who is ignorant of the high veneration,

31. These magistrates, in the original, are styled *Ἀρχαῖοι*, *chief men of Asia*; and it is from this expression, that some have supposed the public games were now celebrating, which seems very probable; and that these *Ἀρχαῖοι* were deputies from the several cities of Asia, who presided over them.

33. The interpretation here given of this passage, seems to be the most probable one. This Alexander was perhaps the same mentioned 2 Tim. iv. 14. See a note there.

34. There cannot be a finer description, in so few words, of a popular tumult, than St. Luke has given us here.

35. It is not well agreed what magistrate is meant here; but it is generally supposed he was the officer, who presided in chief over the public games.

in which this city holds the great goddess Diana; and her image, which is the undoubted offspring of Jupiter. As these things therefore are known to all the world, it is unnecessary to defend them. Let me advise you, therefore, in this matter, to do nothing rashly. These two men, whom you have dragged into the theatre, have neither been guilty of sacrilege, nor of blasphemy. If Demetrius therefore, and the people of his company have any thing to alledge against them, let them carry the affair in a regular way, before the proconsul; where it may be properly determined: or if it relate to any matter not cognizable in the Roman courts, let it be determined in a lawful assembly: but as for this day's tumult, and uproar, for which no reason can be given, it may very probably draw upon us the resentment of the Romans."—This judicious speech had it's effect; and the tumult instantly subsided.

Soon after, Paul calling the disciples together, took a formal leave of them; and followed Timothy and Erastus, as he had intended, into Macedonia. Here he spent some time in exhorting the several churches; and then pursued his journey into Achaia; where he continued three months. From hence he purposed to go by sea into Syria; but hearing, that the Jews intended to way-lay him, he changed his design, and went by land through Macedonia.—In the mean time Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus, his companions,

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CHAP.
XX.

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6. companions, went by sea; and waited for him at Troas: while he took ship at Philippi in Macedonia; and having crossed the Egean sea, came to them; and continued a few days at Troas.

7. On the first day of the week before his departure, he assembled all the Christians of those parts with a view to settle their opinions, and answer any ob-

8. 9. jections, they might make. Their meeting was in an upper room, where many lights were burning; and as Paul had prejudices of different kinds to remove, he continued the assembly to a late hour. In the mean time, a young man of the name of Eutychus, being not much interested in what passed, fell asleep on a window; and dropped down, on the outside of the house, to the ground; where he was
10. taken up dead. But Paul immediately going down, raised him again to life; and presented him to his
11. friends in perfect health. This was not only a great joy to all, who were immediately connected with him; but was a present miracle to confirm the faith
12. of such as wavered.—As daylight came on, Paul administered the holy sacrament to all the assembly;

7. The word *διαλεγομαι*, signifies sometimes to *dispute*, and *question*, as in Mark ix. 33, and Jude 9. It is more probable therefore that it has that meaning here, than that Paul should continue a set discourse during so many hours.

8. It is supposed by some interpreters, that as these nocturnal meetings were become matter of objection to Christians, Paul chose to have the room well lighted; that people might see from the street what passed. No other reason can well be suggested for our being told, *there were many lights burning.*

and

and then, taking his leave, proceeded on his journey by land to Assos; where his companions met him by sea. There embarking, he sailed past the islands of Mytelene, Chios, and Samos, and landing at Trogillum, continued his course the next day to Miletus; which is a few miles south of Ephesus. He would not however visit that city, as he feared he might be delayed, and was desirous of keeping the feast of pentecost at Jerusalem. But as he might not have another opportunity of visiting the Ephesian church, he sent for the elders of it, to meet him at Miletus.

Here he reminded them of the laborious life he had led, ever since his first coming to Ephesus; and of the many difficulties, and dangers, he had encountered among the Jews. He reminded them

12. It is not well determined, whether a common meal is here meant, or the celebration of the eucharist; the same phrase being often used for both. Considering the solemnity of the occasion, commentators are inclined to the latter interpretation: especially as the meeting is introduced with that idea in the 7th verse, where we are told *the disciples came together to break bread.*—Justin Martyr, who wrote only about forty years after St. John's death, speaking of the manner of celebrating Sunday among the Christians of his day, says, "that on Sunday the Christians both of the city and country meet together, because that is the day of our Lord's resurrection. The writings of the prophets and apostles are first read to us. Then the minister exhorts us to imitate what we have heard. We join next in prayer; and lastly receive the sacrament; when they, who are able, give alms." Apol. II. p. 98.—Pliny's account of the Christian sabbath, written a few years before, is nearly the same. "They assemble, says he, speaking of Christians, on a set day, before it is light; and bind themselves by a sacrament to do nothing bad." Lib. X. ep. 97.

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- also, of the faithful discharge of his ministry both
 21. publicly, and privately—the subject of which had
 ever been, that repentance, and faith, were the only
 means of salvation, both to Jew and Gentile.—
 22. And now, said he, I am under the direction of the
 Spirit, on my journey to Jerusalem; not knowing
 23. what it may please God to lay upon me: only this
 I know, that dangers, and difficulties, in some shape,
 24. await me.—But these are not the things, which
 give me pain; if I can only finish my course with
 joy; and the ministry, which God hath intrusted to
 me.—Of this however I am persuaded, that you
 25. shall see my face no more. I take the present op-
 26. 27. portunity therefore of testifying to you, that if any
 man swerve from the truth, I am blameless—I have
 28. opened to you the whole counsel of God.—Be
 you equally attentive, both to your own behaviour,
 and to the church of God, which he hath purchased
 with his own blood; and which the Holy Ghost
 29. hath committed to your care.—Many enemies,
 30. after my departure, will rise up against it. Many
 enemies, even among yourselves, shall arise, to se-
 31. duce you from the truth. Be therefore on your
 guard; and remember the various cautions, which,
 during three years, I have given you on this head.

25. The word *οἶδα* often signifies only *belief*.

28. This very remarkable expression, *the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*, I think cannot easily be evaded by those, who deny the divinity of Christ.

—With these instructions I recommend you to the grace of God; which, with your own sincere endeavours, will perfect you in all holiness.—For myself, you will bear me witness, that I have not preached the gospel among you through any interested motives. You all know that these hands have ministered, not only to my own necessities; but to those of others: and thus also I have instructed my fellow-labourers; always remembering the words of our Lord, *that it is more blessed to give, than to receive*.—After Paul had made this affectionate address, they all joined with him in prayer; and then accompanied him to the ship with many tears, and sorrowful embraces; grieving above all things, at his saying, they should see his face again no more.

Having thus parted with the elders of the church of Ephesus, Paul, and his company embarked again; and holding their course along the islands of Cos, and Rhodes, they landed at Patara, on the south of Asia Minor. Here they found a ship bound to Phenicia; in which they took their passage to Tyre. —At this city, they met with several disciples; who under the influence of the Spirit, exhorted them

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CHAP.
XXI.

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34. See 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12, where St. Paul speaks of it's being his constant practice to labour for his maintenance.

35. These words of our blessed Saviour are not recorded by any of the evangelists; but as, without doubt, St. Paul had them on good authority, they must be considered as making a part of the evangelical history.—The giver is *supposed* here, to have a *good motive* in giving; on which the blessedness of giving depends.

much

5. 6. much against going to Jerusalem. But Paul, persisting in his resolution, they followed him, with their wives, and children, a mournful company, to the shore; where, after prayer, Paul and his friends embarked; and continued their course to Ptolemais.
7. —Here spending a day with the disciples of that place; they proceeded to Cæsarea; where they lodged with Philip, one of the seven deacons. This
8. holy man had four unmarried daughters; whom God had endowed with the spirit of prophecy.
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- While they continued here, the prophet Agabus came from Judea; and taking Paul's girdle, tied it
10. about his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the spirit of God; the Jews at Jerusalem shall in this manner treat the man, to whom this girdle belongeth; and shall deliver him to the Gentiles.
11. —This gave both Paul's companions, and the disciples at Cæsarea great uneasiness. But notwithstanding all their intreaty, Paul held his resolution, saying, What mean you to weep, and to break mine heart. I am ready not only to be bound, but to die also for the sake of the gospel. —When
12. 13. they found it was in vain to persist, they submitted, saying, The will of the Lord be done! —
- 14.

7. Ptolemais took afterwards, in Turkish times, the name of Acra; and was the object of great contention during the holy wars. It is now, Maundrel tells us, a heap of ruins.

8. We are told Acts viii. 40, that Philip lived at Cæsarea.

10. The same who foretold the famine. Acts xi. 28.

Paul therefore set out for Jerusalem, accompanied by some of the disciples of Cæsarea; together with one Mnason, a Cyprian, who had a house at Jerusalem, where it was intended he should lodge.

15. 16.

On their arrival at Jerusalem he and his company were kindly received by the brethren: and the next day Paul went to James, and the rest of the apostles; and gave them a full account of his ministry among the Gentiles. On this they all glorified God.—They again, on their part, informed him of the state of the gospel at that time at Jerusalem—that it had increased exceedingly; but that the zealous Jews, who had embraced it, could not be induced to give up the necessity of observing the Mosaic law. They told him farther, that it was be-

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15. Our *carriages*, should be translated our *baggage*. It is used in that sense in Xenophon's *anabasis*—*Ἐν τῇ πορείᾳ ἀποσκευὰς μέντοι στροφεύτο*. Oxf. edit. p. 344. *After they had dined, they removed on with the baggage.* The word frequently occurs in Xenophon.

21. This passage plainly shews, that one of the chief subjects of St. Paul's discourses to the Jews, was the insufficiency of the Mosaic law in obtaining salvation. This was the doctrine, which had chiefly irritated the Jews against him; and had induced the apostolical college to consult his safety by advising him to conform to the ceremonies of the Nazarite-vow.—As the inefficacy of the Jewish law therefore, particularly of circumcision, and its other rites, were so much the subjects of his preaching; we may conclude also they were equally the subjects of his writings; and that many passages in his epistles, which seem to speak of *faith* in opposition to *works*, must be explained by this key. St. Paul might have preached, as much as he had pleased, about *faith*, and *works*, as that doctrine is sometimes explained, and would have given no offence at all to the Jews. As therefore the apostle's doctrine about *faith* and *works* did give great offence to

22. 23. 24. believed by all the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, that nobody had more opposed the retaining of the Jewish ceremonies among the Gentiles, than he had done. Something therefore, they thought, of a conciliatory nature was necessary. They proceeded to inform him, there were, at that time, among them four persons, who were then under a Nazarite-vow, which was to expire in seven days; and proposed to Paul, that he himself should take the same vow upon him for the same term; and be at the expence of proper sacrifices, and shave his head; by which compliance, in an indifferent matter, he might convince the Jews, that their prejudices
 25. against him were ill-grounded. Nor could this at all affect the Gentiles, as the late decree at Jerusalem had made them perfectly easy.

the Jews; we conclude it could not be a doctrine, which was no way calculated to offend them; but rather a doctrine, which we know, from the first, had always given them offence.

24. There is something very beautiful, and exemplary, in the behaviour of these great apostles on this occasion. No rigour appears in trifling matters; but a desire in all things lawful to accommodate themselves to the prejudice of others.—It is plain from this passage, among many of the same kind, that the apostles had no scruples of conscience in conforming to the Jewish rites. All they contended for, was, that they were not necessary to salvation.

24. It was reckoned among the Jews, very meritorious to contribute to the expences of those, who had taken a Nazarite vow. Josephus tells us, that Herod Agrippa gained great credit by paying the expences of Nazarites; and Maimonides asserts, that he who did it, partook of the merits of the vow.

25. The decree mentioned Acts xv.

This advice Paul followed; and the next day, 26.
 presented himself in the temple; signifying his in-
 tention, after the accomplishment of seven days, to
 offer the sacrifices, which the law required.—But 27. 28.
 before the seven days were expired, some of the
 Asiatic Jews, who had persecuted him in their own
 country, seeing him now in the temple, excited the
 people with violent outcries, against him, as a man,
 who had prophaned the law, and polluted the tem-
 ple, by bringing uncircumcised Greeks into it.—
 This last charge was founded on a groundless sup- 29.
 position, that he had carried Trophimus, an Ephe-
 sian, into the temple; whereas Paul, and he had
 only been seen together in the city.

At these outcries great numbers of people flocking 30.
 together, were soon actuated by the spirit of their
 leaders. Paul was immediately assaulted, and drag-
 ged out of the temple; and the enraged multitude 31. 32. 33.
 would

26. It is not obvious why Paul should offer sacrifices: inas-
 much as by respecting the type, he shewed disrespect to the arche-
 type. All sacrifices, it is true, did not imply propitiation. But
 this evidently did. See Numb. vi. 14. All that can be said, I
 think, is, that Paul offered a sacrifice to compleat his vow—so
 that by taking the vow, he bound himself to offer the sacrifice.

32. Josephus describes this castle, as having four towers, from
 one of which it overlooked the temple; and was therefore a great
 check upon it: for the soldiers could descend by a flight of stairs,
 on any alarm, into the portico of the temple, with which the
 castle was connected. It was repaired by Herod, who gave it
 the name of Antonia in honour of Anthony.

33. *Bound with two chains.* A capital offender among the
 Romans, was secured by being fastened to two soldiers. See the
 same manner of securing mentioned Acts xii. 6. For small
 offences

would have put him instantly to death, if the Roman officer, who commanded in the castle of Antonia, had not issued out with a guard, and rescued him. Lyfias, for that was the officer's name, having ordered Paul to be secured, demanded what they had to say against him? Not being able however to obtain any satisfactory answer from the confused clamours of the multitude, he commanded him to be carried up to the castle. But the croud was so violent, and daring, that the soldiers were scarce able to carry him up the stairs.—In this situation Paul addressing himself to the Roman officer, desired to speak a few words to him. Lyfias surprized at his speaking the Greek language, asked him, If he was not that Egyptian, who, a few years before, had headed a band of four thousand ruffians? Paul assured him, he was not; but that he

offences the prisoner was secured by a single soldier. See Acts xxviii. 16.

38. Josephus gives the following account of this Egyptian—that he got together a tumultuary army; whom he persuaded, to believe, that he would miraculously take Jerusalem, as Jericho had formerly been taken. With this view he led them to the Mount of Olives. But here they were attacked, and defeated by Felix, the Roman governor; who killed, and took about six hundred of them; and put the rest to flight. Among the fugitives was the Egyptian himself, who not being afterwards heard of, was now supposed by Lyfias, to have made another attempt. Josephus gives an account of this Egyptian both in his Jewish war, and in his antiquities, with some variation of circumstances; which Lardner (Credib. Vol. I. p. 414) endeavours to reconcile; and makes both them and St. Luke accord.—Lyfias's conceiving Paul to be this Egyptian gives a strong idea of the tumult.

was a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia; and begged he might be permitted to speak to the people. The Roman officer giving him leave, Paul stood on the stairs of the castle; and having by waving his hand, obtained silence, addressed them in the Hebrew tongue, which still the more engaged their attention.

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CHAP.
XXII.
1. 2.

He began his defence by assuring them, he was a Jew; and tho a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, had been educated in Jerusalem, under their celebrated rabbi Gamaliel; by whom he had been instructed in the law, of which he had been as zealous a defender as any of them.—Nay, in the early part of his life, he had been the most determined adversary of that gospel, which he now professed—and to this the high-priest, and elders could bear witness, under whom he had acted in persecuting Christianity. He then laid before them the singular, and miraculous event of his conversion; and entering into the circumstances of it, related in order, his journey to Damascus—the divine vision, which had been vouchsafed to him—the blindness, with which he had been struck—and his restoration to sight at Damascus—mentioning the name of the person there, who was instrumental in this wonderful recovery.—He then told them, this was not the only miraculous call he had had. In Jerusalem he had a revelation from

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3. *At the feet of Gamaliel*, says the text. This is not figurative; but relates to the manner, in which scholars sat under the desks of their masters.

19. 20. heaven; by which he was forbidden to stay any longer there, as the Jews would not receive his testimony. To this divine injunction he ventured to reply, that the Jews could not doubt the truth, and sincerity of his conversion, from his former severity to Christians; and particularly in the case of Stephen; which would make him, he thought, a properer person, than any other, to convert those, 21. who lived on the spot, and were acquainted with all these circumstances.—But he was ordered by the heavenly voice to leave Jerusalem; and preach the gospel among the Gentiles—

22. 23. Thus far the people heard him patiently: but he had no sooner mentioned the Gentiles, than they broke out again into all the excesses of rage, and violence; throwing off their cloaths, casting dust into the air, and crying out, Away with him—Away with him: it is not fit, that such a fellow should live.

24. The Roman officer, seeing the tumult renewed, and not being able to gather from a Hebrew-speech, what Paul had said, or done, to excite such violence, ordered him to be carried into the castle, 25. and to be examined with scourging. But as the soldiers were binding him, Paul asked a centurion, who stood by, Whether it were lawful to scourge a

23. Throwing dust into the air, is still a mode of shewing contempt among the Arabians, particularly to criminals; as if they were fit only to be covered with earth.

Roman citizen, yet uncondemned?—The centurion mentioning this to his commander, that officer asked Paul, Whether the information he had received, were true, that he was a Roman citizen? To this Paul answered in the affirmative. The officer still doubting his assertion, asked, in what manner he had obtained his freedom? It is not a matter, continued he, easily obtained: it cost me a considerable sum. But Paul informed him, that he was free-born.—This put an immediate stop to the summary way intended of examining Paul; and the Roman officer was not a little apprehensive, on having gone so far. He resolved therefore to have him examined in another manner; and the next day sent to inform the high-priest, and the council, that he would bring Paul down from the castle into the temple; where they might freely examine him; and set forth the ground of all this tumult.

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28. Some learned critics have endeavoured to shew, that Tarsus never was among the Roman *municipia*. If so, Paul's father must have been a freedman, as many of the Jews were. But others say, Tarsus, which sided with the two first Cæsars, obtained municipal privileges from one of these emperors.—Dr. Lardner quotes a passage from Dio to shew, that the chief-captain might easily have purchased his freedom; for at this time the citizenship of Rome was become very cheap. Messalina had introduced the sale of it.

29. It is said, he was afraid, *because he had bound him*—that is, because he had bound him in the ignominious manner, in which he had done for scourging. A Roman citizen might be bound for security; and it appears from the 30th verse, that Paul was still in bonds.

CHAP.
XXIII.

1.

Paul, thus produced before them, looked round the council with some attention; that from a knowledge of the characters of the people, who composed it, he might be able to procure a party in his favour.—He then began with solemnly protesting, that, however traduced he had been as a mover of sedition, his opinions had always led him to a dutiful submission to law, and government—

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The high-priest incensed at this vindication of himself; ordered those, who stood by, to strike

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him on the face: on which Paul, with some warmth, cried out, God shall smite you, for all your hypocritical pretences. Do you sit here to judge me

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according to law, and command me to be smitten, contrary to law?—This speech gave great offence to some of the bye-standers; and Paul thought it right to apologize for the warmth, and impropriety

1. *To a dutiful submission, &c.* As he had been accused of stirring up the people, this seems to be the most probable meaning of the passage.

3. The appellation of *whited wall* was probably in allusion to our Saviour's calling the hypocritical Pharisees, *whited sepulchres*: tho otherwise it was a very apposite appellative, as the high-priest, at least in exercising his functions, wore *a large white robe*.—This denunciation of God's wrath against this wicked high-priest, was fulfilled in the beginning of the Jewish war, about five years after. Josephus informs us, that in a tumult having hid himself in an old aqueduct, he was discovered, dragged out, and put to death. Bell. Jud. lib. II. c. 17.

5. Paul thought it right to apologize. *I wist not*, seems to mean, *I did not consider*.—Or it may mean, he did not know him: for the high-priest might have been then in a common dress. He wore his pontifical robes only when he ministered in the temple; see Ezek. xlv. 19.

of his behaviour; saying, he had not attended sufficiently to what he said; for the word of God enjoined him not to speak disrespectfully of the ruler of the people.

This interruption being over, Paul began again; and having observed there were many Pharisees in the council, he said, he knew well, that it was not for being a mover of sedition, that he was called in question; but for holding the opinion of the resurrection of the dead, which as a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, he had always maintained.—

This immediately produced a division in the assembly, which consisted of Pharisees, and Sadducees; the latter of whom denied the existence of a future state. While these therefore thought Paul should be treated with every severity; the Pharisees declared, they saw no fault in him: but if an angel from heaven had spoken to him in that wonderful account he had given of his conversion, they should beware of doing any thing in opposition to God.

—By degrees the dissention arose to such a height, that the Roman officer fearing, lest Paul might have been torn in pieces by the contending factions, ordered the guard immediately to carry him back to the castle.—That night the Lord favoured him with a heavenly vision, exhorting him not to sink under this persecution; and informing him, that he was appointed to bear witness of the truth at Rome, as he had already done at Jerusalem.

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12. 13. The Jews now finding all their public measures against Paul, ineffectual, some of the most zealous of them resolved on other means. About forty of these zealots binding themselves privately by an oath, that they would neither eat, nor drink, till they had destroyed him, went to the chief priests; and informing them of their conspiracy, desired them to request the commanding officer to bring down Paul again, the next day, to be examined. In the mean time they would seize the opportunity, as he came out of the castle, to fall upon him, and put him to death.—This conspiracy was discovered by a young man, a kinsman of Paul; who procuring admittance into the castle, opened the whole affair to the apostle. On this, Paul calling a centurion, desired him to carry that young man to his commanding officer; to whom he had a secret to impart.—Lyfias taking the young man aside, heard all the particulars of the affair; and dismissed him with a charge of secrecy. He then ordered two centurions to have a body of horse, and foot, ready to march to Cæsarea, at nine that evening; and to provide beasts, to carry the prisoner Paul to Felix the proconsul; to whom he wrote the following letter.
24. “ Claudius Lyfias to the most excellent governor Felix, greeting.—The person presented to you with this letter, is a Roman citizen; who having been the occasion of a great tumult at Jerusalem; in which he was in danger of his life, was rescued by
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by me, and conveyed to this castle. As I wished to know what was objected to him, I brought him before the high-priest, and his council: but it appears to me, that the chief offence he has given, is with regard to certain religious opinions, which he holds: for nothing of a criminal nature has been laid to his charge. Finding however, that the offence, of whatever kind, was likely to occasion great disturbance here, I thought it right to remit the case to you; ordering the accusing party also to attend. Farewell."

The centurions receiving the letter, carried Paul that night to Antipatris; and the next day the foot returning, the horsemen conducted him to Cæsarea; where they delivered the letter into the hands of Felix, the proconsul; and at the same time presented Paul.—Felix having read the letter, asked to what province the prisoner belonged? And being informed, that he was a native of Tarsus, in Cilicia; he ordered him into confinement, till his accusers should arrive.

In less than a week the high-priest Ananias, and many of the council, with an eloquent man, one Tertullus, whom they employed as an advocate, arrived at Cæsarea, as Paul's accusers; and the proconsul appointed a day of hearing.—Tertullus be-

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CHAP.
XXIV.

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3. These compliments were paid much at the expence of truth; for Josephus, and Tacitus both inform us, how very corrupt a governor Felix was.

- gan his accusation of Paul by paying the proconsul many compliments on the great happiness, which the Jewish nation had long enjoyed under his government.—He then gave a brief account of the cause he had in hand; informing the proconsul, that the prisoner, who was a violent man, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, had been at the head of many seditions among the Jews, in different parts of the empire—and that at Jerusalem, he had been guilty of an attempt to profane the temple—that they had had no intention of troubling the proconsul in this matter; but meant to have punished the prisoner agreeably to their own law; had not the tribune Lyfias taken him violently out of their hands, and referred the matter to the proconsul's tribunal.
9. —This charge was supported by the high-priest, and his council; who all bore witness to the truth of what had been alledged.
10. The proconsul then giving Paul liberty to defend himself, he first expressed his satisfaction, that he had a cause to defend, before a judge, who had been for many years, acquainted with the laws, and customs of the Jews.—He then, in answer to the charge against him, gave a short account of his whole conduct. He said, that about twelve days
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6. As the Jews could not put a criminal to death, tho they were impowered to inflict slighter punishments, the real meaning of what Tertullus said, was, that they intended to have put him to death in a tumultuary manner, without any process of law at all.

ago he went up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of pentecost—but that he had neither disputed in the temple, nor in the synagogue, nor in the city—nor had taken any one step, which had the least tendency to raise a sedition—that in short, the whole charge against him was unsupported—and he might challenge them to *prove* any single particular of it.—With regard to his being a *ringleader of the Nazarenes*, he said, he owned himself a Christian; and tho the Jews might call Christianity by the name of heresy, it was certainly the completion of their own law, and prophets; and held out the great articles of a resurrection from the dead, and a state of rewards and punishments, which the generality of themselves allowed. In a word, he said, it was on the ground of this very persuasion, that he persevered, both in the performance of his duty to God; and in an inoffensive behaviour to man.—As to their last charge of his *prophaning the temple*, he ran over the particulars of his coming to

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14. Dr. Lardner lays great stress on the expression, *so worship I the God of my fathers*, as making the chief point of Paul's defence. I shall lay the substance of what he says before the reader.—“By the Roman laws, no man might introduce, or worship foreign Gods, not allowed by public authority. Yet Christians were protected by law, because they worshipped the God of heaven and earth—the God, whom the Jews worshipped; and whose worship was every where established. St. Paul's reasoning therefore was this. They call Christianity a new sect. Be it so: but in this way I worship the same God, which they do; and therefore am intitled to protection equally with them.” Credib. p. I. b. I. ch. viii.

Jerusalem,

Jerusalem, to bring alms to the poor Christians there—of his purifying himself peaceably in the temple—and of the violent attack that had been made upon him by the Asiatic Jews; whose not appearing against him, he thought, was ground sufficient to reject *this* part of the charge. Of these transactions, he said, the high-priest, and council of, the Jews, who were *not present*, could be *no witnesses*. They could be witnesses only of what had passed in their own assembly; where, he believed, nothing offensive could be produced against him, but his asserting the doctrine, he had just mentioned, of the resurrection of the dead.

Felix having thus heard the accusation, and defence; and knowing enough of the Christian religion to be well assured, there was nothing in its principles of seditious tendency, saw plainly how frivolous the accusation was, and did not chuse to pass sentence against Paul. On the other hand, being unwilling to displease the Jewish council, he did not care to dismiss him. He therefore took a middle course, and told the Jews, he should decide nothing in the affair, till the arrival of Lyfias, the tribune; whom he would examine with regard

21. As Paul's asserting the resurrection of the dead had actually produced a tumult, (see chap. xxiii. 9, 10.) it is probable, he might mention it now, in his defence, as the only circumstance, which could give colour to his being a raiser of sedition; tho it was clearly such a circumstance, as no judge could turn into crime,

to the several circumstances, which had been al-
 leged.—In the mean time, he gave Paul into
 the custody of a centurion, with orders to let him
 have his full liberty of going any where, and of
 seeing whom he pleased.

After this, Felix, for some time, left Cæsarea.
 On his return he brought with him a Jewish lady,
 whose name was Drusilla: and whether through
 her curiosity, or his own, or some other motive,
 he sent for Paul, and desired to hear his account
 of the Christian faith. As Felix had been a great
 oppressor, and had now been guilty of a very fla-
 grant action in seducing Drusilla from her husband,
 Paul took this opportunity to awaken his conscience,
 by explaining the virtues of *justice*, and *continence*,
 and enforcing what he said by the *terrors of a future*
judgment. His discourse made such an impression
 on Felix, that he was thrown into great agitation
 by it; and abruptly dismissing the apostle, told him,
 he should hear him farther at a time of more lei-
 sure.—The impression however soon went off;

23.

24.

25.

26. 27.

.3. 7. 3.

25. The fact about Drusilla is mentioned by Josephus. Hist.
 lib. XX.

26. Felix knew the Christians to be a numerous and very
 charitable body; and that it was common with them to raise
 contributions for the assistance of their brethren.

27. How much reason he had to ingratiate himself with them
 is very evident: for he was accused with great vehemence of
 mal-administration, when he left his province; and had cer-
 tainly been ruined, if great interest with Nero had not interposed.
 See this proved by quotations in Lardner's Credib. part I. book I.
 chap. I.

and

and the mind of Felix, (as is usual in such cases) returned to it's former habits. He sent however frequently for Paul, after this—not to hear him discourse any more on religious subjects, but with a view to extort money from him for his release; and in this suspense he held him two years.—

About the end of that time, Portius Festus was appointed proconsul, in the room of Felix; and Felix, with a view to ingratiate himself with the Jews, left Paul still in custody.

CHAP.
XXV.

1. 2. 3. 4.

In a few days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went to Jerusalem; where, among the first articles of business, he was informed by the high-priest, of the case of Paul; and was intreated to send for him to Jerusalem, and examine him there. But whether Festus had any intimation of the intention of the Jews to lay in wait for him (which in fact they did intend) or he had some other reason, he shewed at first no inclination to indulge them; but let them know, he should examine him at Cæsarea, where he himself was then going; and that the accusers of Paul might follow him thither.—Accordingly in about ten days, he went to Cæsarea, when Paul was brought before him—and the chief priests attended. The accusation contained little more; and of course the defence, than in the former trial.

5.
6. 7. 8.

9.

By this time, however, a better understanding had commenced between the chief priests, and their new governor; and Festus found it his interest

terest to gratify the Jews with another trial in their own courts at Jerusalem. However, as Paul was a Roman citizen, this could not legally be done without his own consent.—Paul availed himself of his privilege; and knowing the inveteracy of his enemies, he rejected the idea of a Jewish court; and refused to be tried by any laws; but those of the empire. At the same time, considering the harsh treatment he had already met with at Cæsarea, where he had been in custody two years, for no offence; he stood upon his innocence, and appealed from a provincial tribunal, to that of Cæsar; and Festus, having advised with his officers, allowed the appeal.

10, 11.

12.

Soon after this, Herod Agrippa, tetrarch of Galilee, and his sister Bernice, came to Cæsarea in compliment

13.

11. This appeal seems to have been made in consequence of the heavenly instruction he had received, chap. xxiii. 11.

13. This Agrippa, son of that Herod Agrippa, who had put James to death, was king of Chalcis; a small district lying, as is supposed, between Libanus, and Antilibanus. The keeping of the temple of Jerusalem, with the holy garments, and the treasure, was committed to him by the emperor. In other respects he had little concern in Judea.—Bernice, his sister, is suspected to have lived criminally with him. Juvenal is supposed to allude to them in his sixth satyr, where speaking of a rich diamond belonging to Bernice, he says,

—hunc dedit olim

Barbarus incestæ, dedit hunc Agrippa sorori.

This lady, who seems to have been the Cleopatra of those times, had once almost drawn aside the celebrated Titus; but that youthful conqueror at length subdued his passion. “Fuere qui accensum desiderio Berenices reginæ crederent. Sed gerendis

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H

rebus

- compliment to Festus, on his arrival in the province;
 14. and Paul's cause becoming the subject of conversation
 15. 16. 17. between them, Festus mentioned what had been
 18. done in it—the circumstances of the trial—and the
 19. frivolous accusation brought against him. He had
 supposed, he said, the Jewish priests would have
 laid some civil crime to his charge: but instead of
 that, they accused the prisoner chiefly of holding a
 few superstitious opinions; particularly about one
 20. Jesus, who had been executed, and whom Paul
 affirmed to be still alive. As these were points,
 Festus said, about which he had no knowledge
 himself, and which he thought could only be decided
 properly in a Jewish court, he had wished to have
 21. the affair heard at Jerusalem. But as the prisoner,
 who was a Roman citizen, had appealed to Cæsar,
 22. he had determined to send him to Rome.—On
 this, Agrippa expressed a desire to hear the account
 which Paul had to give of himself: and Festus ac-
 cordingly promised, that he should hear him the
 23. next day.—The next day therefore Paul was sent
 for to attend Festus, who was accompanied by
 24. 25. Agrippa, Bernice, and their principal officers. The
 proconsul opened the business by saying, that as the
 prisoner, who had made himself so offensive to the
 Jews, had done nothing worthy of death, and had
 appealed to Cæsar, he had determined to send him

rebus nullum ex eo impedimentum." Tacit. hist. l. II. c. 3.
 See likewise Suetonius in Tit. c. 7.

to Rome: but as there appeared a very frivolous charge against him, he was glad of the opportunity of this hearing before Agrippa, as it might furnish him with some better account of the affair, than he had yet had: for there was something very improper, he thought, in sending a prisoner, and not signifying, at the same time, the particulars of his crime.

26.

27.

CHAP.
XXVI.

1. 2.

3.

4. 5.

6. 7.

Festus having thus opened the affair, Agrippa bad Paul make his defence: on which Paul raising his hand, thus spoke.—I think it is a great happiness, king Agrippa, that I am allowed to answer for myself; this day before you; whom I well know to be informed in all the doctrines, and customs of the Jews. I beseech you therefore to hear me patiently.—My manner of life, from my earliest youth, is very well known to the Jews, if they would bear witness to it; and the principles also, which I then professed. No man was a stricter Pharisee; nor more versed in the doctrines of that sect. No man trusted more in those gracious promises, made to our fathers, which are confessedly the great end of the Mosaic law; and the great foundation of the hope of every serious Jew. And yet I stand here accused for believing, that God hath fulfilled those promises, and those hopes by

4. St. Paul is supposed by Bp. Lowth, in his commentary on If. liii. 8. to allude to a Jewish custom, which had been denied him. See a note on John xviii. 21. where the same custom is supposed to be alluded to.

8. raising Jesus Christ from the dead. Why should
 9. 10. 11. it be thought incredible, that God should raise the
 dead?—For myself, it cannot be imagined I em-
 braced Christianity on a slight evidence, when I
 had entered so deeply, and so conscientiously into
 an opposition to it; having long been the instrument
 of severity in extirpating it, both in Judea, and
 12. other places.—But my conversion had a still
 stronger ground-work, than human evidence. It
 13. 14. 15. was the immediate work of God.—Paul then gave
 16. 17. 18. a summary account of his conversion; and particu-
 larly of the injunctions, which the heavenly vision
 had laid upon him, to be a minister, and an apostle
 of Christianity; to open the eyes of the blind;
 and to draw men to the acknowledgment of the
 truth—that through faith, and repentance they
 might inherit everlasting life.—This heavenly
 19. vision, king Agrippa, continued the apostle, I have
 20. ever since obeyed; and have, every where, both
 in Judea, and among the Gentiles, preached merely
 the inoffensive doctrines of faith, and repentance,
 which are also the great tenets of the Christian
 21. religion: and this is the only ground of enmity,
 22. which the Jews can alledge against me.—Through
 God's help also I have hitherto been enabled to

8. The apostle might allude either to the Jewish history, or the history of Christ, for instances of God's raising the dead: or, he might mean, that it was as easy for Almighty Power to raise a dead body, as to create a living one.

testify,

testify, what is at the same time, intirely agreeable to Moses, and the prophets—that Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead; and be the great author of salvation to all mankind, Gentiles, as well as Jews.

23.

As Paul was thus speaking, Festus, who thought these doctrines strange, and inconceivable, called out, with a loud voice, Paul thou art beside thyself. Thy learning makes thee mad.—Paul denied the charge; and then turning to Agrippa, appealed to him for the facts, which he had related. He could not, the apostle told him, be ignorant of these things; for they were all very public transactions; nor could he, as he was so nearly connected with the Jews, be ignorant of the tendency of the prophetic writings. And he boldly put the question to him; whether he did not believe the prophets? Agrippa freely confessed that his words had made some impression on him: to which Paul answered, that he wished to God, the truth might have it's full effect, not only on him; but on all, who had heard him that day; and that they might embrace it from conviction, as he had done; tho without suffering, as he had, in it's defence.

24.

25. 26.

27.

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29.

28. Some commentators suppose, that Agrippa's speech, *almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*, was spoken in derision. But it seems more probable, that it was a ray of conviction, which just broke in upon him. Like Felix however he received no lasting impression; for we have no account, that he ever became a Christian.

30. 31.

Paul having ended his speech, Agrippa, and Festus conferring together, concluded, that he had done nothing, that deserved even imprisonment; and Agrippa said, he might certainly have been discharged, if he had not appealed to Cæsar.

32.

CHAP.
XXVII.

1. 2.

As it was determined therefore that Paul should be sent to Italy, he was delivered, together with a Christian of Thessalonica, whose name was Aristarchus, and some other prisoners, into the hands of Julius, a centurion of Augustus's legion; and carried on board a Mysian vessel, which was engaged in a trading voyage, along the coast of Asia.

3.

4. 5.

The first port they entered, was Sidon, where Julius, with great civility, gave Paul leave to go on shore, and visit his friends.—From thence they stood to the north, intending to touch at some of the ports of Asia: but a contrary wind carried them along the coast of Cyprus; and they were not able to reach any Asiatic port, till they arrived at Myra in Lycia.—Here Julius found an Alexandrian

6.

2. I have mentioned Aristarchus as a prisoner, which he seems to have been from Col. iv. 10. It does not however certainly appear; nor indeed for what purpose he is named. These little particularities however add some value to the truth of a relation; and are marks of it's authenticity: for, *at the time*, we may suppose, they were well known; as they would not otherwise have been mentioned.

3. From the first person plural, used often in the description of this voyage; it appears that Luke still accompanied Paul.

6. Mr. Bryant, in his dissertation on the wind Euroclydon, has given us a very satisfactory account of the Alexandrine trade to Italy, which consisted chiefly in corn. See p. 17.

vessel

vessel bound to Italy; and embarked on board it, together with the prisoners under his charge.— From this harbour their voyage was greatly interrupted by contrary winds; and it was several days before they were able to reach the eastern end of Crete; which they passed, with difficulty; and took shelter in a bay, called the Fair-haven, not far from the town of Lacæa.—As it was now late however in the year, just after the fast of the atonement, when the stormy season generally sets in, Paul advised the centurion to winter where he was; as there would probably be great danger in putting to sea. But the centurion listened rather to the master of the ship, and others, who advised him to leave the haven, as incommodious to winter in; and to endeavour to reach Phenice. This was a Cretan harbour likewise; and a much safer road; being totally landlocked by a small island; except in the two different directions through which it is entered between the two points of the island, and the Cretan coast.— Taking the advantage therefore of a gentle breeze from the south, they set sail, coasting along the shores of Crete, in hopes of reaching Phenice without difficulty. But a violent storm arising soon after

7.

8.

9. 10.

11. 12.

13.

14.

9. This fast is kept at the end of September, about the time of the equinoctial winds. See Levit. xxiii. 27, and xvi. 29. Num. xxix. 7. Jos. Antiq. III. 10. 3.

10. Paul no doubt often spoke as a mere man. Here perhaps from some signs in the heavens, he foresaw a storm. Many interpreters however suppose him under the influence of inspiration. Either sense may be admitted.

- from the north-east, and the ship becoming unmanageable, the seamen were obliged to let her drive.
15. —At the south-west end of Crete lies a small island, named Clauda. Under the shelter of this land, they got up the boat with great difficulty; and passing a cable round the ship, they drew in all the sails, and resigned themselves to the mercy of the winds. They were chiefly afraid of the quicksands, towards which the tempest drove them.—
16. 17. The next day the storm increasing, they threw out a quantity of the lading; and the day after they were obliged to cut away a part of the masts, and rigging. In this condition being tossed about many days in a raging sea; and seeing neither sun nor stars to direct their course, either by day, or night, they gave up all hopes of being saved.—Paul however, after they had undergone much fatigue, reminding the seamen of the loss they had already
18. 19. 20. 21. 22.

15. The expression in the original is very animated: *πλοῖον μὴ δυναμὲν ἀντοφθαλμεῖν τῷ ἀνέμῳ*: the ship could no longer look the storm in the face.

17. This practice, which is here called, *undergirding the ship*, is in use at this day. In Lord Anson's voyage the captain of a Spanish ship, we are told, was obliged, in a storm, to take six turns of the cable round the ship, to prevent her opening.

17. These are generally supposed to have been the African quicksands, where, Virgil tells us, Æneas suffered the loss of three of his ships.

—————Tres Euris ab alto
In brevia, et fyrtes urget——

19. What is particularly meant by throwing out the tackling of the ship, is not easy to say. It is plain from ver. 40, that all their masts were not cut away.

suffered

suffered through the neglect of his advice at Crete,
 bad them still be of comfort; for he was assured
 they should all yet be saved. This night, said he, 23.
 the angel of that God, whom I serve, appeared unto
 me; and informed me, I must be carried to Rome. 24. 25. 26.
 From this vision I know we shall be cast on an
 island: but no lives shall be lost. Trust therefore
 in this assurance from God.—The ship having 27. 28.
 now been driven about during fourteen days, and
 the storm still continuing, at midnight, the seamen
 conjectured they drew near land, as they found only
 twenty fathom of water; and soon after only fifteen.
 They threw out four anchors therefore from the 29.
 stern; and wished for the morning. Some of them 30.
 however not liking their situation in the ship; and
 chusing rather to trust themselves to the boat, began
 to let her down, under a pretence of fixing other
 anchors at the prow. but Paul observing them, 31.
 told the centurion, that he must not suffer them to
 leave the ship. It was not God's intention, he
 said, to save them by a miracle; but through the
 means of their own strenuous endeavours. The sol- 32.
 diers, on this, cut the ropes; and let the boat

27. This sea is called Adria; but it is generally supposed, that the Mediterranean, and not the Adriatic, is meant. See Wells's geog. of the New Testament. See also Bochart. Strabo, and other ancient geographers certainly give great latitude to the Mediterranean: and an old scholiast upon Dionysius's Pariegesis, says Το Σικελικόν τὸ το πῆλαγος Ἀδριαὶν καλεῖται. They call the Sicilian sea, Adria. See Bp. Pearce's com.

33. drop into the sea. As the day was coming on, Paul, who had now gained a great ascendancy in the ship, called the crew together; and as they had eaten little, or nothing the day before, he advised them to
34. take some refreshment; assuring them again, that
35. not one of them should perish.—He then called for food; and giving thanks, he distributed it among
36. them. The apostle's behaviour occasioned a general cheerfulness, and alacrity among all that were on
37. 38. 39. board. Their first business was to lighten the ship,
40. 41. 42. by throwing out the remaining part of the wheat,
43. 44. with which she was laden.—As the day came on, the land appeared; but what land, they knew not. Observing however a creek, they determined, if possible, to run the ship into it. Taking up the anchors therefore, and hoisting a sail, they loosed the helm, and ran directly for the shore.—Between them, and the coast lay a bank, or shelf, formed by two opposite currents. On this shelf the ship ran aground; and the fore-part being immoveably fixed; the stern was beaten in pieces by the violence of the waves. In this exigence the foldiers advised to put the prisoners to death, lest any of them should escape. But the centurion, through his particular regard for

33. This passage is very ill translated in our Testament. The words, in the original, *τεσσαρεςκαιδεκατην σήμερον ημεραν προσδοκῶντες, ασιτοι διατελεσται μηδεν προσλαβόμενοι*, may be thus literally translated; *All this fourteenth day have you waited, and continued fasting, having taken nothing.* The day before is meant; as the day and night made the Jewish day.

Paul,

Paul, prevented them; and all had liberty to endeavour to save themselves. They who could swim, leaped first into the sea; and the rest got on rafts, or broken pieces of the ship: so that, in the end, every person on board, tho the company consisted of two hundred and seventy-six people, got safe to shore.

As soon as they landed they found the island was called Malta; the inhabitants of which, tho a barbarous

CHAP.
XXVIII.

1. 2.

1. Mr. Bryant has endeavoured to shew, that Paul was not shipwrecked on the island of Malta, but on another island of the same name in the Adriatic. I admire his learning; but cannot easily accede to his conclusion.—In the first place, there are very good authorities, particularly that of the Alexandrine MS, for reading *Ευρακλῶν*, for *Ευρακλῦδον*. If so, the ship was driven by a north-east wind; in which situation she could scarce possibly enter the gulf of the Adriatic; but would be very naturally driven towards Malta.—Secondly, another ship is mentioned, (xxviii. 11) as driven out of it's course in the same direction, and to the same place, as that in which St. Paul was driven. To suppose two ships driven so exceedingly out of their course, and, as it appears, at different times, is perhaps supposing too much.—Thirdly, the manners of the people, as described by St. Luke, agree much better with the inhabitants of Malta, than with those of the Adriatic isle. The inhabitants of the latter, according to Mr. Bryant's own account, were the most lawless people upon earth. They lived by piracy; and for their crimes had been almost extirpated by the Romans. It is true, St. Paul calls the inhabitants of the island where he landed, a barbarous people: but it may easily be supposed he called them so merely in conformity to the Greeks and Romans, who stiled all people barbarians, who spoke a language different from their own. Thus Paul himself in another place, says, (1 Cor. xiv. 11) *If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian; and he that speaketh, shall be a barbarian unto me.* Certain it is, that by whatever name he called them, he meant to express no barbarity in their manners; as one should naturally expect in a nest of proscribed pirates. They shewed the apostle,
and

3. barous people, administered to their wants, and shewed them every kindness in their power.—Soon after their landing, it happened, that as Paul was taking up a bundle of wood for the fire, a viper, which was concealed in it, fastened upon his hand.
4. The people, who stood around him, observing it, concluded immediately, that he was some very wicked person, whom the vengeance of heaven still pursued, tho he was suffered to escape the storm.
5. But when they saw him shake the viper into the fire; and instead of swelling, and falling down dead, as they expected, appear not to be in the least injured, they changed their minds, and thought
7. him a God.

and his company great kindness from the very moment of their landing. The place where they landed was civilized enough to afford lodgings for two hundred and seventy-six people; and when all this company departed, they were not only *loaded with such things as were necessary*; but presented with many gifts. There seems also to have been a Roman governor in the island, as one should judge from his name, and the manner in which he is introduced.—Fourthly, after the winter was over, we are told, that when Paul, and his company embarked again, they touched first at Syracuse in Sicily; from whence they went to Rhegium. This was exactly their right course from Malta; but somewhat out of it, if they came from the Adriatic isle. In that case, they must have touched first at Rhegium, and then at Syracuse; if they had any business at Syracuse at all.—Lastly, a tradition yet exists at Malta of St. Paul's landing there. On the north-east coast a place is shewn, bearing the name of *La cala di S. Paolo*: and here (as a captain of an English ship, who had been there, assured me) a place may be seen, *where two seas meet*.—The island of Malta takes its name from the quantity of honey it produces.

6. Some late travellers have asserted, that in the island of Malta there are no venomous creatures. It is rather, I think, asserting too boldly a point so difficult to be ascertained.

Near

Near the place, where the ship went on shore, the principal person of the island, whose name was Publius, resided; who sending for Paul, and his company, kindly entertained them at his house, till they could get lodgings provided.—Soon after, Paul hearing that Publius's father was seized with a fever, and dysentery, went to him, and by his prayers restored him to health.—This brought many of the island, who had diseases, to Paul; all of whom he healed.

8.

9.

10. 11.

They had now been three months in Malta; during which time they had received many tokens of kindness from the friendly islanders: but the winter being past, Julius began to think of continuing his voyage to Rome. He hired an Alexandrian vessel therefore, which had wintered in the isle, whose name was Castor and Pollux, in which he set sail; and landed first at Syracuse, where the ship continued three days.—From thence coasting the eastern side of Sicily the vessel

12.

13.

11. Called so probably from the images of Castor and Pollux on her prow; as was usual among the ancients:

——aurato fulgebat Apolline puppis.

Æn. X.

13. The Greek word is *πεπηλασμενος*; which is translated, *fetches a compass*: but it is fetching no compass to sail along the coast of Sicily from Syracuse to Rhegium. The meaning therefore must either be, that they *sailed along the coast*; which the word may express: or, if it be translated, *fetches a compass*, it must mean, that they were obliged to make several *tacks*, as the seamen call them, before they could reach Rhegium.

anchored

- anchored in the bay of Rhegium : and the next day obtaining a favourable breeze from the south, passed the straits, and soon arrived at Puteoli. Here Paul found several Christians ; and at their earnest desire, staid a week with them ; and then set out for Rome.—His approach being known, several Christians came out of the city to meet him, some as far as the three Taverns ; and others as far as the Appii forum. Paul thanked God for his goodness, and took new courage, on finding that the Christian religion was so openly professed at Rome, that its converts durst shew their regard to a persecuted apostle.—On their arrival at Rome, Julius delivered the prisoners to the præfect of the prætorian cohorts : but representing Paul's case favourably, the apostle was permitted to dwell by himself, with a single soldier to guard him.

14. This shews how much the apostle was favoured by the centurion.

15. It is remarkable, that Tully also mentions *these two places together*, in one of his letters to Atticus (II. 16). He is speaking of two notes which he had written to him, as he left Rome. He wrote one, he says, ab Appii foro horâ quartâ : dederam aliam, paulo ante, in tribus Tabernis. The former of these places was about fifty miles from Rome, the latter about thirty.

16. The præfect of the prætorian cohorts, at this time, was Burrhus, an officer of great worth ; who, with Seneca, endeavoured to check the early improprieties, and absurdities of Nero. —Paul's confinement was the most easy the Roman law allowed. According to the Roman custom, a chain of a convenient length was fastened round the right arm of the prisoner, and round the left of the soldier. We need not however suppose, that this chain was always fastened : but only when he went abroad.

There

There were, at this time, among the regular inhabitants of Rome, many Jews, who had settled there on various occasions. Paul therefore, within a day or two after his arrival, sent a message to the principal of them, intreating them to come to him at his lodging. When they were assembled, he told them, that as his case was a peculiar one, he had sent for them to give them the particulars of it.—He then informed them of the circumstances of his trial; and the reasons, which had induced him to make that appeal, which had brought him to Rome.—He did not mean, he said, to accuse his countrymen; but to defend himself—assuring them, at the same time, that nothing had been laid to his charge at Jerusalem; but the propagation of that gospel, to which all the prophets pointed.—When he had done speaking, the Jews assured him, they had heard nothing to his disadvantage from any of their brethren in Judea: only this they knew, that the Christian religion was every where opposed; and therefore they desired to know from him what could be said for it.—Accordingly a day was appointed, and a numerous assembly of Jews coming to his lodgings, he expounded the gospel to them, and shewed them how exactly it had fulfilled the predictions of Moses, and the prophets.—What he said, had it's effect on many. But others paid

17. 18. 19.
20.

21.

22.

23.

24. 25. 26.
27.

26. See Isa. vi. 9.

no attention to his discourse. These he reminded of the prophet Isaiah's severe description of persons in their situation, who purposely excluded themselves from the truth.—He then opened to them the intention of God in offering to the Gentiles the blessings of the gospel, which they would accept, tho the Jews had rejected them.—It appeared however, that the Jews had violent disputes among themselves about these things.

30. 31. After this, Paul continued two years at Rome, in his own house; which he turned into a kind of school of religion; and preached the gospel without the least molestation from any one.

30. The case of Paul, as a minister of the gospel, was now much improved, by his appeal. While he was prisoner in Judea, it does not appear, that he exercised any apostolical functions. Now, he received all who came to him—made converts—wrote epistles to distant churches—sent out fellow-labourers; and in short, exercised all the apostolic duties, except that of visiting in person. We have no reason therefore to regret the apostle's appeal to Cæsar. It was a prudent measure on his part, as he could not otherwise have avoided the malicious persecution of the Jews: and it discovers the over-ruling providence of God, in the various happy events, which were occasioned by it.

END OF THE ACTS OF
THE APOSTLES.

GENERAL PREFACE

TO

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES.

WE have seen the particulars of the life of our blessed Saviour recorded in the writings of the four evangelists; and have seen also, in the Acts of the apostles, the manner, in which the Christian religion was first propagated among the heathen nations. We come now to the epistles, or those letters, which the apostles wrote to the several churches they had established; either to confirm their faith; or to remove the errors, which had been introduced among them.

Most of these epistles were written by St. Paul; whose writings are commonly esteemed among the most difficult parts of scripture. Tho he is considered as a close reasoner by those, who are themselves the greatest masters of reasoning; yet it often requires more than ordinary attention, to follow his argument.

One source of obscurity is the quickness of his ideas. They crowd upon him. One thought often starts another,

* See Mr. Locke on St. Paul's epistles.

which does not directly follow it in place; but being necessary for the support of some point, arising from the subject, tho' not leading immediately to it, requires that we should watch the writer's return to his principal point, with some attention.

The undetermined use of the pronouns *I* and *we*, is thought also by learned men to occasion obscurity in St. Paul's writings. Sometimes the apostle speaks in his own person; sometimes as a Jew: sometimes as a Gentile: sometimes as an infidel; and sometimes as a believer.

But the chief obscurity in St. Paul's writings, arises from the subject. The other epistles, which are called *catholic*, are commonly written on *general* topics of religion. The epistles of St. Paul are of a different construction. They are principally intended to oppose such antichristian tenets, as were getting ground in the apostle's time. Many parts indeed of these epistles are direct answers to questions, or to the particular statement of cases, which had been put to the apostle: and the obscurity arises from our having only the answer before us; but neither the question, nor the state of the case.—St. Paul's epistles have lately received much elucidation from a very ingenious, and acute work by Mr. Paley, intitled *Horæ Paulinæ*, in which their authenticity has been greatly strengthened by producing a variety of incidents from them, corresponding with other incidents in the history of St. Paul. It is an admirable proof, so far as it goes, that every part of scripture hangs together.

P R E F A C E

TO

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE to the ROMANS.

THE most obstinate controversy, in the early age of the Christian church, was that, which was raised by the Jewish Christians in behalf of the law of Moses; which the more zealous among them contended was necessary to justification. This controversy was carried on with great acrimony both at Rome, and in other places, where Christian converts consisted of Jews, and Gentiles. Nor need we wonder at the great ascendancy of the Jewish, over the Gentile Christians, when we consider, that Jesus was himself a Jew—that his life had been spent in Judea—that his personal application had been made solely to the Jews—and that the Jewish scriptures afforded one of the strongest proofs of Christianity. When therefore, after our Saviour's death, the completion of those grand prophecies with regard to the *rejection of the Jews*; the *call of the Gentiles*, and the *total abrogation of the Mosaic economy*, was taking place, the bulk of the Jewish nation was highly offended. This revolution indeed was so mortifying to them, that even many, who had seriously em-

braced the Christian religion, could not easily lay aside their prejudices on this head. Their pride in being God's favorite people—their contempt of the Gentiles—their belief of inheriting the promises of God, as Abraham's children—their attachment to the temple-worship—to circumcision, and the other ceremonies of the Mosaic law, as necessary to justification—and their throwing scruples, and difficulties in the way of the Gentile converts—were opinions, and practices, which the apostles thought it highly necessary at all times to oppose.

These are the chief subjects of the following epistle to the Romans; in which St. Paul gives the Christian converts at Rome, both Jews, and Gentiles, just notions of the religion they had received. He tells them, that the ceremonies of the Jewish law were now fulfilled, and abolished—that altho many *individuals* among the Jews might embrace the gospel—yet as a *people* they were rejected—that, with regard to religious privileges, no *one* nation was now more favoured by God than *another*—and that the Gentiles, according to the predictions of the prophets, were called, together with the Jews, to partake equally of the benefits of the gospel; and on faith, and repentance to be equal inheritors with them of everlasting life,

But tho. *this controversy* with the Jews concerns the Christians of *these times* very little, who from their earliest youth have been instructed in those truths, to which the apostle led the Jews by long reasoning; yet *other controversies* for want of attending to the scope of the apostle's argument, have been ingrafted upon it, which import them much—controversies particularly about *predestination*, and *faith*.

PREFACE.

v

The controversy about *predestination* probably did not arise in the church, till that early one with regard to the *Jews and Gentiles*, on which it is founded, had been forgotten. The scope, and connection of St. Paul's warm, and figurative expressions with regard to *vessels of mercy*, and *vessels of wrath fitted for destruction*, not being sufficiently attended to, the *primary* meaning of them was lost with a large party of Christians; and instead of being explained as *terms* expressing the general *faith*, and *penitence* of one nation; and the general *hardened infidelity* of another, they were made to express the *salvation of one man*, and the *damnation of another*—not according to the gospel-terms of *faith*, and *repentance*; but by the absolute decrees of God. Whereas, in fact, the apostle seems not to have the least allusion to *particular persons*. The words *elect*, *chosen*, *justified*, were terms familiar among the Jews for persons conditionally called into a state of grace; and as such St. Paul adopts them.

From the same discourses mistakes again have arisen with regard to *faith*, and *works*. The apostle's argument seems chiefly addressed to the Jews, who conceived the Mosaic ceremonies, or the works of the law, to be necessary to salvation, tho we find no traces among them of any controversy about other works. It is most probable therefore, that the apostle writing to Jewish Christians, treats a subject, which we know was so much agitated among them; and that when he speaks of *justification by faith*, he means, in general, *justification by the gospel*, which we accept through *faith*: and when he speaks of *works*, his argument most frequently requires him to mean the *ceremonies*, and *observances of the Mosaic law**.—I

* See a note on Acts xxi. 21.

Speak in general, for he sometimes, no doubt, treats of that great gospel-doctrine, the insufficiency of all moral works to procure God's favour, without the merits of Christ.

In this epistle the apostle, after his introduction, expresses his joy at the steadiness of his new converts; and intimates his intention of going to Rome, 114—shews the necessity of the gospel dispensation; first to the heathen world; and secondly to the Jews, 114—answers an objection, with regard to the utility of the Jewish law, 116—resumes his argument, 117—General idea of Christianity, 118—The case of Abraham considered, 118—applied to the Jewish law, 119—nature of Abraham's faith: applied to Christians, 120—Love of God shewn in the Christian dispensation, 121—universality of Christ's atonement, 122—holiness of life the great end of Christianity, 122—salvation through Christ as necessary to the Jew, as to the Gentile, 124—blessedness of the gospel, 125—particularly in our afflictions, 127—The apostle bemoans the state of the Jewish nation, 129—vindicates the judgments of God, 129—shews that his treatment both of the Jews, and the Gentiles is agreeable to the predictions of the prophets, 132—and that Moses himself pointed out God's intention of superseding the law by the gospel, 133—the gospel ought of course therefore to be preached to the Gentiles, 134—The rejection of the Jews only partial, and temporary, 135—the conversion of the Gentiles will, in part, contribute to convert the Jews, 136—but a time will certainly come, when their *national* conversion shall be effected, 137—The Jew, and Gentile converts exhorted to live together in purity and peace, 138—Instructions with regard to civil government, 139—Difference in opinion should
create

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create no animosity amongst Christians, 141—The apostle intimates a design of visiting the Roman Christians, 144—and concludes with particular commendations; and cautions against ill-designing persons, 145.

APPENDIX

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EPISTLE

OF

ST. PAUL to the ROMANS.

PAUL, appointed by the immediate revelation of God, to be an apostle of the Gentiles; and to teach the religion of that Saviour, who being foretold by the prophets, and descending in a natural course from David, was declared by miracles, and his resurrection from the dead, to be Son of God—grace and peace to all the Christian converts at Rome.

It is with great thankfulness to God, that I hear of your steadfastness in the Christian faith. My prayers, be assured, you always have; and among my other requests to God, it is one, that I may see you soon; and that we may comfort each other by our spiritual intercourse. Often have I intended to visit you; but have been hitherto prevented.

VOL. II.

I

My

CHAP.

I.

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14. 15. 16. My apostleship extends both to the civilized, and barbarous parts of the Gentile world: and I am not ashamed to preach the gospel of Christ, even at Rome—that gospel, which holds out, through faith, the only means of salvation vouchsafed to fallen man.

17. The guilt of sin is pointed out by nature. God hath strongly impressed a sense of religion, and duty on the minds of men. From the visible creation they might have inferred an invisible Creator. But instead of pursuing such inferences of reason, and shewing that gratitude, which they ought, to the divine goodness; they gave themselves up to their corrupt imaginations; setting up the resemblances of men, and even of beasts, as the objects of worship.

17. *As it is written, the just shall live by faith.* This is a very apposite application of a passage in Habbakuk. That prophet had been representing to the Jews (chap. ii. 4) the approach of captivity; and takes occasion to shew them, that the proud, and obstinate should suffer; and that they who had faith in the prophecy, should escape.—*The righteousness of God* signifies, in this passage, as in other parts of scripture, rather the manner of being justified, than the righteousness of God's nature.—*From faith to faith*—from faith in God to faith in Christ.

4. *Or despisest thou the riches.* From the redundant use of the words *riches*, and *rich* in St. Paul's epistle, (which are words seldom used in the same figurative sense in other parts of scripture,) Mr. Paley, with his usual acuteness, draws an argument in favour of their authenticity. See Hor. Paul. p. 236.

18. *Who hold the truth in unrighteousness*—who imprison it, as it were, by their wicked lusts, and passions.

21. It is remarkable, that *gratitude* is here put for the whole of religion. Similar expressions are frequent in scripture; in which a *considerable part* is put for the *whole*.

24, &c. We have the same process of wickedness from idolatry, given us in the Wisdom of Solomon; in which (cap. XIV) we find

ship.—Abominable lives of course followed an abominable religion; and there is not a single instance of wickedness, which has not been commonly practised, and even encouraged in the heathen world.

26. 27. 28.
29. 30. 31.
32.

In the mean time, is the self-approving Jew less guilty? In condemning his Gentile neighbours he condemns himself. No doubt he is right, in denouncing the judgments of God against wickedness: but does he not involve himself in the same sentence? Nay, has he not more to answer for, from his scorning the goodness of God, which would lead him, as it were, by the hand, to repentance—from his rejecting the means of grace—and from his defying that righteous tribunal, which in exact proportion will distribute reward, and punishment both to Jew, and Gentile? There the Jewish prejudice

CHAP.
II.

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find the following passages.—“ Therefore upon the idols of the Gentiles shall be a visitation. They are become a stumbling block to the souls of men. The devising of idols was the beginning of spiritual fornication; and the invention of them, the corruption of life. They ascribe unto stones, and stocks the *incommunicable name*. Moreover, it was not enough for them, that they erred in the knowledge of God; they slew their children in sacrifices—they used strange rites—they kept neither lives, nor marriages any longer undefiled—there reigned in all men laughter, theft, dissimulation, perjury, changing of kind, disorder in marriages, adultery, and shameless uncleanness.—The worshipping of idols is the beginning, the cause, and the end of all evil.”

12. *As many as have sinned without law*—that is, without the Mosaic law, or under the law of nature.

16. I have here transposed the 16th verse, and added it to the 15th, following the opinion of some able interpreters.

12. 16. shall have no place. Every sinner, in that righteous day, shall be judged impartially, according to the light he has received. The upright Gentile, and the nominal Jew, shall find very different treatment. Externals will be of no avail.—You call yourself a Jew; you boast of your exact knowledge in the law; and of your being a guide of the ignorant. But your precepts are confined to others. They direct not your own practice. Your actions contradict your preaching; and you continue to fulfil that ancient complaint of the prophet, that the Jew even increases the irreligion of the Gentile. What! is circumcision, do you suppose, an excuse for sin? Shall that, which profits you only, if you *keep the law*; be a cover to you for *transgressing it*? shall a mere ceremony, unconnected with morals, give you any advantage over the Gentile? Or rather, shall not his natural probity discountenance you, if you have nothing to boast, but mere externals? It is not outward circumcision, that constitutes the Jew: it is the circumcision of the heart only, which meets the approbation of God.

CHAP.
III.

1. Since then both Jews, and Gentiles are thus equally involved in guilt, it may be asked, What advantage ariseth from the Jewish dispensation?
3. —I answer, chiefly in it's being the vehicle of

21. See Matt. xxiii. 3.

22. *Idolatry* is spiritual *sacrilege*. In Justinian's code, under the title of *sacrilege* we find, *Imperatori eripere, quod ejus est.*

24. This alludes probably to Ezek. xxxvi. 23; or Isa. lii. 5.

conveying

conveying through different ages, God's promises of salvation; which are, and will be compleated, notwithstanding the infidelity of the Jews themselves. The infidelity of man only the more recommends the truth of God.

If then, replies the Jew, the truth of God be recommended by my infidelity; does it not seem hard, that I, who am the author of so happy an effect, should be the object of God's displeasure? —What! shall we impute injustice, in any instance, to the great judge of heaven and earth? Extend the doctrine farther: let every other sinner conceive himself the favourite of heaven: and let the slander pass universally, that the apostles of Christ preach the necessity of evil, that good may arise from it.—I hope so mischievous an error will never get ground among you.

On the whole then we conclude, that both Jew, and Gentile are in a sinful, unjustified state—a state described by David in the fourteenth psalm, and in other parts of scripture, where we have catalogues given of various kinds of wickedness. The Jew may apply such passages perhaps only to the Gentile: but let him be assured, that an application was intended also to him. The prophet undoubtedly means to describe the *universal guilt of mankind*.—

20. By the *law* here the apostle seems to mean (in order to give his argument it's full force) *law of every kind*, moral, and ceremonial.

20. From hence therefore we conclude that the law
 21. could not justify. It gave man indeed a more accurate knowledge of sin; but could not save him from it's effects.

22. 23. 24. But now another mode of salvation, and yet testified by the law, and the prophets, is offered to mankind; tho the law itself could not offer one—
 25. *salvation through faith in Christ; which, as all had sinned, is freely offered to all.* This great mode of salvation God hath now held forth for the remission
 26. of sins; and hath in one act, declared both his truth in the completion of his promises; and his goodness in shewing mercy to sinful man. All pre-eminence
 27. then and boasting are excluded. The privileges of
 28. the law are of no avail. God is not now stiled the
 29. God of Israel; but the God of all mankind. The
 30. circumcised, and uncircumcised are all justified alike
 31. by faith; which is so far from being contradictory to the law, that in fact it is a confirmation of it by establishing it's promises.

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2.

Indeed you will find this mode of justification by faith even prior to the law. Consider the case of Abraham. On what, I ask, was his justification grounded? You find nothing said of his glorying in any works, or observances; or of his being justified

28. The word *law* in this passage, seems to be confined to the Mosaic law.

30. *By faith* and *through faith* seem to convey the same meaning.

tified

tified by any thing of that kind. But you read, that *he believed in God*; and that his *belief was counted to him for righteousness*. Now if Abraham had depended on his own righteousness for his justification, he would have claimed it *as his due*. But you see he makes no such claim; receiving it as the free grace of God, who accepted his faith for righteousness: just as David also speaks of God's justifying his faithful people by mercifully blotting out their sins.

The present question then, how far the Jewish law avails in justifying it's professors, admits an easy answer from the case of Abraham. We have seen that Abraham *was justified by faith*. We find also, that he was justified, *before he was circumcised*. Circumcision therefore, so far from being the *cause of his acceptance* with God, was only the *seal of that acceptance*, which had been vouchsafed to him *through faith*. Thus he became properly the father of all

3. Gen. xv. 6.

3. As a comment on St. Paul in this place, we must read the following passage from St. James ii. 21. *Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar? Seest thou, how faith wrought with his works; and by works was faith made perfect.* From the comparison of these two passages we conclude, that it was the holy life, which Abraham led, through his faith in the promises of God, that was his recommendation to mercy.

8. See Pf. xxxii. 1.

13. *Heir of the world*; that is, of all the faithful, that should be collected from every part of the world; who should be given him, as it were, for a posterity. The Hebrews use the word *heir* in that sense.

14. true believers, without any distinction of Jew, or Gentile. So that if the Jew claim the inheritance of the promise from Abraham, merely as a Jew, he plainly sets aside the only title, by which that patriarch himself inherited; and leaves himself still under the penalties of the law. God hath promised acceptance therefore on the condition of *faith*; which is not only an easier condition; but the only way he hath appointed to fulfil the promise made to Abraham, of making him *the father of many nations*.
15. 16. 17. —Consider then the nature of Abraham's faith. God had promised him a numerous posterity in his old age; which to him appeared like raising the dead. He had such faith however in God, that without hesitation he firmly believed, and trusted in him, who had promised, not doubting but he was able to perform: and this faith was imputed to him
18. 19. 20. 21. 22. for righteousness. —Nor can we suppose, that Abraham's faith was casually mentioned. It was recorded certainly for our instruction. The same righteousness will be imputed to us, if we follow the example of Abraham; and as firmly believe in that God, who raised up Christ from the dead; who dying for our offences, rose again to establish, and confirm his promises.
23. 24. 25.

17. *Who calleth those things, &c.* that is, who speaketh of things, which do not yet exist, as if they really did exist; because he foresees their existence in due time.

24. The nature of Abraham's faith is here again plain from this passage. He believed in the promises of God; and through that faith he performed the will of God.

On

On this true faith then let us rest; and having obtained peace with God through Christ, let us evermore rejoice in this blessed hope; and be ready to suffer any affliction for the sake of our profession. Affliction is the exercise of Christian virtue; and tends, in proportion as the love of the world fails, to dilate our hearts with the love of God—of that God, who gave his Son to die for us, even when we were the greatest sinners. However upright a man's general character may be, he will not easily find a friend ready to suffer death for his sake. Where benefits indeed have been conferred, the effects of gratitude may be great. In what light then should we consider the love of God, who gave his Son to die for us, even when we were engaged in the most hardened opposition to him? From such an instance of kindness in the death of Christ, we cannot but have the most assured hope from his resurrection; and evermore rejoice in that great

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3. *We glory in tribulation.* The apostle very often advances this doctrine, to shew the Jews the nature of Christ's kingdom; as our Saviour before had often shewn his disciples. The Jews from the beginning were unwilling to acknowledge, that the Messiah's kingdom was to have any thing to do with tribulation.

6. *ἵνα αὐτὸν ἀντὶ ἡμῶν ἀποθάνῃ* properly signifies *he died in the room, or stead of sinners.*

7. Goodwin in his Jewish antiquities, (l. I. c. IX) has a very ingenious explication of this celebrated passage. He supposes it to allude to the rabbinical distinction of mankind, into *good, righteous, and sinful.* The *good* man is he, who acts in a sphere, superior to all human laws; while the *righteous* man is satisfied with the boundaries, which law allows him.—Some instead of *δικαίως* read *ἀδίκως*.—It is thus in the Syriac version. See a note on Matt. i. 19.

atonement,

atonement, which has opened to us everlasting happiness.

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CHAP.
VI.

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Thus was redemption, through Christ, as general, as death through Adam. For tho Adam's *mode of transgression* could not be general; yet every man followed his example, and sinned against some law: for where there is no law, there can be no sin. And thus from Adam's time, the reign of death has been universal.—But now observe the difference between the fall, and the redemption of mankind. Observe how much the benefit of the latter outweighs the mischief of the former. By the one, Adam's *particular trespass* was punished: through the other, *all our sins in general* are forgiven. By the former, *death* was incurred: by the latter *eternal happiness* was obtained. And observe farther, that as all the nations of the earth were rendered guilty by the offence of Adam; it follows, that all the nations of the earth shall be restored by Christ. The law, no doubt, gave new powers to sin, by opening more it's guilt, and it's effects; and the more sin triumphs, so much greater appears the efficacy of grace, which counteracts it's ruinous effects.

Shall we then make the grace of the gospel an apology for sin? God forbid! The Christian, by his profession, is dead to sin. The very act of his

4. This idea alludes to the ancient mode of immersion.

initiation

initiation implies it. What does baptism represent, but our dying to sin, and rising to righteousness? How again are we to imitate the death of Christ, but by crucifying our sins; that being renewed in righteousness by his death, we may partake of his resurrection? He that is *dead*, is free from sin. The *life* of a Christian should be such a *death*. Unless, in this moral sense, we die with Christ, we cannot hope to live with him. After his crucifixion, Christ died no more. Having died once for sin, an eternity of life was before him. You too have died once to sin; be now therefore for ever alive to God, through Christ.—Let the Christian then, as far as he can, make this mortal life a life of purity; and dedicate all his passions, and affections to that holiness; which his profession demands. Being delivered from the terror of the law, he is now received into mercy through grace.—Only still let me caution you not to presume on God's grace. Your service must not be divided between sin, and the gospel. You must renounce the one, before you can attach yourselves to the other. But I trust in God, your choice is already made; and that, whatever you *may have been*, you *have now* withdrawn yourselves from the bondage of sin, and dedicated yourselves to a happier service.—Take then a review of your lives; and consider, whether any advantages accrued from sin, which were equivalent to it's consequences—whether any of it's enjoyments could counterbalance misery, and death?

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22. 23. death? Consider also, whether you have any reason to repent of these new engagements; which lead you through a life of holiness, to everlasting happiness.

CHAP.
VII.

1. 2. 3.

Having thus addressed myself to Christian converts, in general, I now address myself particularly to the Jewish Christian. His attachment to the Mosaic law, is exactly similar to the case of marriage; which is only an obligation, till the death of one of the parties. So that the law, to which you were once espoused, being now dead, it is no more apostasy in you to receive the gospel; than it is adultery for a woman to be married to a second husband, after the death of a first. From the effect of those transgressions, which under the Mosaic law admitted only legal atonement, you are now delivered: your services are transferred from carnal observances, to spiritual attainments.

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Does the law then, you ask, lead us into sin?—No otherwise than by giving us a more exact knowledge of it; and revealing to us God's commandments against it. Thus, for instance, I should never have known the guilt of covetousness, unless the law had said, *Thou shalt not covet*. For the guilt of sin is increased in proportion to the clearness of the law against it. Had you been born Gentiles, you would have known less; and of course have

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9. 10. 11.

1. *As long as he liveth*. It should be translated, *as long as it liveth*; meaning the law.

finned less. But the knowledge of the law introduced also the knowledge of sin. The law then is good; but it is our transgression of it, which is the mischief. Our transgressions are all against knowledge. The very witness of my conscience proves the excellency of the law. What is right, I know. The difficulty lies in the performance. In fact through the corruption of my nature I cannot fulfil the law. While I live in the world, I shall always experience the opposition between the law of God, and the temptations of worldly things: and in the extremity of guilt, the Jew, as well as the Gentile, must cry out, Who will deliver me from this cruel bondage?

Here then comes in the gracious offer of the gospel, which alone holds out a remedy in our distress. That remission of sin, which the law could not provide, the gospel offers to all, who live agreeably to it's precepts. We are freed from the effects of sin and death; and in the room of that perfect obedience, which the law demands, the gospel graciously points out, through Christ, the humble

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CHAP.
VIII.

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24. *Who will deliver me from the body of this death?* Some have thought that the apostle here alludes to the cruel custom often practised by tyrants, of tying dead bodies to those, which are alive. It may be an apposite allusion, but I think hardly the apostle's meaning.

3. *And for sin condemned sin in the flesh.* This passage, which is scarce sense, by the introduction of a comma after the first *sin*, is very plain. *God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin*, (that is, as a sacrifice for sin) *both condemned*, &c.

endeavours

5. 6. endeavours of a spiritual life; to which it's motives, aided by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, as naturally lead, as the motives of the world do to a carnal life: and this carnal life tends as directly to misery, as
7. 8. 9. the spiritual life does to happiness. For the worldly mind is always at enmity with God. It is the heavenly mind only that is pleasing to him: and if you live under the influence of God's holy Spirit, which dwells in you; you are then, and then only, of
10. 11. Christ's fold. In that blessed state you are subject to no death, but a mere temporal dissolution; you are raised to life through the atonement of Christ. *His resurrection is an earnest of yours.*
12. 13. Be not then, my brethren, alive only to this world. Bury your sinful affections, that you may live for
14. ever. None are the children of God; but they,
15. who are guided by his Spirit. All slavish notions in religion are removed. God graciously styles himself
16. 17. our Father. Let us then be his obedient children; and endeavour to attain that glorious inheritance, which is promised to those, who renounce sin, and vanity for his sake; and consider this world only as
18. a progress to the next.—And indeed what is the value of it? What proportion does your short time here, bear to an eternity of happiness hereafter—

11. Mr. Locke supposes, that the apostle is not here speaking of the *resurrection*; but of that *principle of spiritual life*, which we receive through the Spirit of God. And this indeed may perhaps be the better sense. There is great force, I think, in what Mr. Locke says. He translates ζωοποιῶν καὶ, *shall quicken even*.

that

that great point, to which all the race of mankind have ever looked up with so much anxious expectation? For there has ever been in mankind, lost as they are, yet formed originally for immortality, some heavenly spark of hope; that after throwing off this fleshly incumbrance, they should become the partakers of a more glorious state. The blind heathen expected this state, as well as we, who have the assurance of it from God. We all live in hope. A state of enjoyment, is not the state of this world: but a religious hope carries us through all it's afflictions. In our infirmities we pray; and often ignorantly: but the Holy Spirit of God suggests a language of the heart beyond the power of words—a language, which He, who searcheth the heart, will always graciously interpret.

Be assured therefore, that whatever afflictions may befall you, the course of this world will always work

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27.
28.

19. I have applied this, and the following verses to the heathen world, as Dr. Whitby, and other learned commentators have done. Dr. Doddridge applies them to the whole creation. Either application, I think, makes good sense.—There is hardly a passage in the New Testament which has suffered more by translation, than this; and yet it admits of an easy solution by a different punctuation, and translating *οτι*, v. 21. into *that*, instead of *because*. *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, (for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him, who hath subjected the same) in hope, THAT the creature itself, &c.*

22. There is something very beautiful in thus introducing the whole creation, as if travelling in birth—throwing off the load of nature, and producing a new offspring from grace.

26. See a note on Luke x. 40.

out

29. out good to those, who having been called to the blessings of the gospel, obey it's precepts. Keep therefore this gracious call, which you have had, continually in your minds. Remember always, that your heavenly Father, with a foreknowledge, that comprehends all events, originally intended you to be partakers of these blessings. You have been called; and if you obey that call, you shall in consequence be justified, and glorified.—How then ought these things to affect us? If God be with us, what matters it, who is against us? He who gave his only Son to die for our sins, we may rest assured, will deny us nothing, that is proper for us.
30. —Regard not then the opposition of those, who would deprive you of these blessings. Who is he that condemneth? And who is *He* that justifieth? Make the comparison yourselves; and consider the love of Christ, who died for our sins, and now maketh intercession for us with God. Let nothing then in this world—not even it's most formidable
31. terrors, interrupt the joys of religion: but let us
32. triumph over it's afflictions; persuading ourselves,
33. 34.
35. 36.
37. 38. 39.

28. The apostle here seems to address himself to the Gentile Christian; whom God, in his foreknowledge, decreed, should be called into the church of Christ; or, in St. Paul's language, *should be conformed to the image of his Son*. Mr. Parkhurst has examined all the passages, in the New Testament in which *προορίζω* (to predestinate) occurs. From a diligent attention to them, says he, the reader may determine for himself, whether in any one of them it has any relation to an absolute, unconditional predestination of particular persons to eternal salvation. See Park. Lex.

that

that if our own endeavours are not wanting, nothing in this mortal state, neither the fears of death, nor the enjoyments of life—neither wicked men, nor wicked spirits—neither adversity, nor prosperity, can separate us from the love of God through Christ.

But however glorious an event the calling of the Gentiles may be; the rejection of the Jews is certainly a very melancholy one. It oppresses me with sorrow; and I should cheerfully devote myself to death, if my sufferings could be of service to that people—once so favoured—in covenant with God—the depositories of his law—and above all, that honoured nation, which hath given birth to the Messiah.

I mean not however to insinuate, that God had not entirely fulfilled his promises to the Jews. It was never *supposed*, that a bare descent from the

CHAP.
IX.

1. 2. 3.

4. 5.

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3. The words of the original *θυχομαι γαρ αυτος εγω αναθημα ειναι απο τε Χριστου*, are variously interpreted. Some suppose an exclusion is meant only from the visible church of Christ. Others, among whom is the learned Dr. Whitby, take the words literally, as if the apostle really wished himself accursed; solving the harshness of the supposition, at the same time, by saying, the word *θυχομαι* signifies, *I could even wish*; that is, *if such a wish could be of any avail*.—Others make *απο τε Χριστου* to signify *after the manner of Christ*.—After all, perhaps, as the words contain no doctrine, the apostle had no absolute precise meaning; but only shewed the ardour of his love, by an earnest, hyperbolical mode of speaking.

5. No criticisms on the words of the original *Ο ου επι παντων*, &c. have been able, I think, to overthrow their force, in proving the divinity of Christ. To give the argument however it's full scope, examine Bowyer's conjectures on the place, who candidly states the authorities, on which the opinions with regard to this text depend.

patriarchs was the only title of a true Israelite: nor that the promise should extend to the Jews, merely as the children of Abraham. Abraham had many sons: but none of them inherited, except Isaac. *Sarah shall have a son*, are the words of the promise: by which we are taught, that it was not merely a descent from Abraham, that gave a title to it.—

10. 11. 12. The same selection was shewn in the case of Jacob.
13. The national blessings promised to Isaac, were continued to that patriarch in preference to Esau.

14. What has the Jew then to object? He was received, as descended from Isaac, in preference to Ishmael: can he then murmur at God's now accepting the *Gentile* on an equality with him? Even his

15. 16. own lawgiver informs him, that God confers national blessings for his own wise reasons, and at his own
17. good pleasure.—Thus also God takes his own

time

11. It is plain the *everlasting state* of Jacob and Esau, as *individuals*, is not here even hinted at. The passage plainly alludes to Gen. xxv. 23. *And the Lord, said unto her; Two nations are in thy womb; and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and one people shall be stronger, than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*

15. Exod. xxxiii. 19.

17. This passage alludes to Exod. ix. 16. which relates both to Pharaoh and his people, whom God in that *public manner* plagued for their sins, as it is expressly said, *to make his name to be declared through all the earth.*

17. The word St. Paul uses, is *ἐγχεῖσα*, which, literally no doubt, signifies, as we translate it, *I have raised up*: but I think it may also, without any force, signify, *I have raised thee to thy power*; or *I have given thee thy exaltation*.—The septuagint hath translated the Hebrew of Moses by the word, *διάρρησιν*; which signifies

time for punishing; as he saith to Pharoah, I have exalted thee, for the very purpose of making thee an instance of my power. Thus God assumes to himself, without explaining his reasons, the power of conferring *national blessings* on some, and making *public examples* of others.

18.

You will perhaps then ask, Why God finds fault with the Jewish nation, who have only fulfilled his will?

19.

—Every demand of this kind is impious. Nations in

20. 21.

signifies, *thou hast been preserved*; that is, kept alive under these plagues, for this very purpose.

18. *Whom he will, he hardeneth.* It is evident from the whole Mosaic history, that what God did to Pharoah tended naturally to *soften* him; tho Pharoah like other sinners, turned those means of *softening*, into *hardening*: so that in God's agency here, one step seems to be sunk; and the *hardening* is made God's deed; tho in fact it was Pharoah's. Pharoah was a wicked prince. God did not make him so, that he might be an instance of his power: but being a wicked prince, God made him the *example* be intended.

21. St. Paul's words allude manifestly to a passage of Jeremiah, (xviii. 2.) which greatly illustrates them, as it has a plain reference—not to *individuals*, but to the *whole Jewish nation*. “Arise, and go down to the potter's house. Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay, was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel.—At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it—if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice; then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.”—It is remarkable also that in the contents prefixed to this chapter in our English Bible, we are informed, that, *Under the type of a potter, is shewed God's absolute power in disposing of nations: which plainly shews,*

- in the hands of the Creator, are clay in the hands of the potter. Each vessel receives it's proper form; itself uninstructed in it's maker's purpose.—Sup-
22. pose God, to make his indignation against sin the more exemplary, hath reserved the impenitent Jews to be punished in one general, or national rejection:
23. 24. suppose also, that to shew the extent of his grace, he hath taken the Gentiles, as well as us, who be-
25. lieve, within the covenant of grace; is this more than the prophet Hosea expressly tells us? *I will call them my people, who were not my people; and her*
26. *beloved, which was not beloved;* that is, I will form a church among the Gentiles, where formerly it did not exist.—But with regard to the salvation of
27. *individuals*, doth not Isaiah speak with equal plainness? *Tho the people of Israel be as the sand of the*
28. *sea,—a remnant shall be left. The issues of the Lord's wrath, however decisive they may appear, shall overflow*
29. *with righteousness.* And again, *Except a remnant had been left, we should have been utterly destroyed like Sodom,*
30. 31. *and Gomorrha.*—Thus then the Gentiles have obtained

that the reformers of those days, did not draw this allegory to countenance the doctrine often built on God's foreknowledge; tho, in general, they were not ill-inclined to it.

25. Hosea i. 10.—ii. 23.

27. If. x. 22, 23.

29. If. i. 9.

30. In this verse the apostle seems to draw a conclusion from the whole. *What shall we say then?* (What shall we conclude from these premises) why, that the Gentiles shall be called to partake of the gospel, while the unbelieving Jews are rejected. —From this conclusion of the argument, I think it still appears more

tained justification by faith; which the Jews in vain attempted to obtain by the observances of their law. Salvation through faith in Christ, was a stumbling block to them, as the prophet had foretold it should be: *Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling stone, and rock of offence; but whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed.*

And yet I hope, and pray, that God will at length accept this hardened nation; which, after all, it must be acknowledged, hath a religious zeal. Ill directed it certainly is. Instead of obtaining justification in God's way, they attempt it in their own; not considering that their law is an introduction only to the gospel. And indeed unless we consider the language of Moses himself in this light, (as making the law an introduction to the gospel) it would imply a sort of contradiction. In one passage he speaks of the great difficulty of *observing* the law; as when he pronounces a curse on every man, who does not obey it, in all it's parts. In another, he speaks of the removal of all difficulty; and of the *easiness* of *performance*: plainly intimating, that the harsh, and impracticable terms of the law, should in time be superseded by a covenant, which should offer salvation on the easier terms of faith†.

On

more plain, that the passages in this chapter, which have misled so many people, relate merely to this subject.

33. If. viii. 14.—xxviii. 16.

† I have endeavoured to give the scope of the apostle's meaning, in this difficult passage; in which he applies the words of Moses,

CHAP.
X.

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11. 12. On the whole, the tender of the gospel is universal. God makes no distinction between Jew, and Gentile; but promises to receive into favour all, who accept his gracious offer. *Whosoever*, saith the prophet, *shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.*—As therefore God meant to make a gra-
- 13.
14. 15.

in the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses, to the gospel. Whoever compares Deut. xxvii. 26, or Levit. xviii. 5, with Deut. xxx. 12, 13, 14, which the apostle almost literally quotes, will see that Moses gives in these two several passages, very different representations. In one he speaks of the *difficulty*; in the other of the *easiness* of the law; and the apostle seems to apply these latter passages to the gospel. I dare not however lay much stress on this interpretation. All I can say, is, that I am dissatisfied with all the interpretations I have seen.—A friend gave me the following explication of these difficult verses; of which the reader may judge.—As Moses warned the Jews not to suffer their faith, and practice to languish from any pretended obscurity, which they might say, veiled the word of God from their eyes; for it was “nigh them, even in their mouth, and in their heart”—so do I, says the apostle, warn you against such infidelity with regard to the acknowledgment of Christ. You have seen him come down from above—You have seen him rise from the dead. Do not therefore say, Who shall bring Christ from heaven, or who shall bring him from the dead? But confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart, that God hath raised him from the dead.

13. Joel ii. 32.

14. The preaching here meant is the *apostolic mode* of preaching, attended by miraculous powers. Preaching the gospel among heathen nations by simple missionaries, without these marks of a divine commission, was what the apostles never attempted. After the gospel was fully established, it appears to have been the design of Providence to bring about the conversion of heathen nations by the gradual progress of civilization; which seems at this time to be working in all parts of the world. Nor is the badness of the instruments, in some parts, any objection: God works with instruments of every kind.

cious

cious offer to the Gentiles, the necessity of *preaching* the gospel to them, immediately appears. And however inadequate the success; yet still, as preaching is the appointed mean, it must of course be every where continued and extended. Let the Jews therefore recollect some of the predictions of their prophets on this head. Moses tells them, *they should be moved to jealousy by the nations they despised*;—and Isaiah represents the Almighty discovering himself *to nations, that knew him not*;—and taxing the Jews with their *obstinacy and infidelity*.

We must not however suppose the Jews are totally cast off. God forbid, that I should use such language towards that nation, with which I must ever consider myself connected. God, who foreknows all things, will not intirely cast them off. Elijah formerly cried out, *Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone; and they seek my life also*. But recollect what answer God returns: *There are yet seven thousand in Israel, who have not bowed the knee to Baal*. We consider the Jews in the same situation now. Tho as a *nation* they are rejected; yet many *individuals* are in a state of grace. But they must ever remember, that *it is* a state of grace; and that their salvation is

CHAP.
XI.

1. 2. 3.

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19. Deut. xxxii. 21.

20. If. lxv. 1.

21. If. lxv. 2.

3. 1 Kings xix. 14.

4. 1 Kings xix. 18.

- not derived from any merit of their own performances.
7. Such only meet the acceptance of God, whose salva-
 8. 9. 10. tion is derived from Christ. All who reject this
 mode of salvation, are in that state of hardened
 guilt, which the prophet describes by *eyes that see*
not, and ears that hear not; and other circumstances,
 11. which denote great perverseness, and infidelity. God
 forbid however, that we should consider the Jews as
 utterly lost. Let us rather hope, that by the call
 of the Gentiles, they may in the end be incited to
 embrace that offer, which they have now rejected.
 12. And as their loss has been the gain of the Gentile
 world; their recovery will be matter of joy to all
 13. Christians. I glory in being the apostle of the Gen-
 14. tiles; yet still must I earnestly strive to promote
 15. the salvation of my own countrymen; and repeat,
 that their conversion will be matter of great joy to
 16. the whole Christian world. The Jewish nation must
 always be considered as the root, from which Chris-
 17. tianity springs. You Gentiles are only grafts upon
 18. 19. that ancient stock. From it your nourishment arose.
 You are ingrafted where the original branches were
 20. broken off. Take care therefore, lest that infide-

7. So I should explain, what St. Paul here calls *election*.

16. *If the first-fruit be holy, the lump also is holy.* This alludes to the offering of the first-fruits; which made the harvest to be esteemed clean. Thus the apostle considers the Jews as the first-fruits, as it were, of that holiness, which was introduced by Christianity. Unless the first-fruit had been holy, neither could the whole body of revealed religion, which was connected with it, have been holy.

lity,

lity, which destroyed them, be not also destructive
 to you. If the natural branches were not spared;
 much less reason have you to hope, who are only
 ingrafted.—And now observe, how amiably, and
 yet how awfully, the kindness, and severity of God
 are tempered together—kindness to you; and severity
 to the impenitent Jews. May you both improve
 under a just sense of these holy dispensations! Take
 you care, not to change the kindness of God into
 severity: and let them endeavour to avert that
 severity, and change it into kindness. God's mer-
 cies will ever be tender towards them. They are
 the ancient branches; and may therefore more readily
 be ingrafted upon their old stock. In the spirit of
 prophecy we foresee a time, after the conversion of
 the Gentile world shall be effected, when all Israel
 shall be gathered into the fold of Christ. Hitherto
 your obedience hath taken the place of their infi-
 delity: but God will never forget his covenant with
 their fathers; nor repent the promises he made to
 their posterity. Once you were in a state of infide-
 lity; but were enlightened by them: they are now
 in that state themselves; and shall hereafter be en-
 lightened by you. Thus all the world, both Jews,

21.

22. 23.

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25. 26. 27.

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28. *As touching the election, they are beloved for their fathers sakes.* This expression seems to point out the apostle's idea in the 9th chapter. Who, says he, were the objects of *election*? Not this, or that individual; but the whole Jewish nation; who are be-
 beloved for the sake of their fathers. The argument therefore
 seems to be, that the Jewish nation, which *was rejected*, will
 again be *elected*: that is, taken within the pale of Christianity.

and

33. and Gentiles, each infidel by turns, shall finally be
 34. 35. the objects of God's mercy.—How wonderful are
 36. the effects of his wisdom, and knowledge! To us
 his ways are wholly inscrutable. It is evident we are
 indebted to ourselves for nothing. To him there-
 fore be ascribed, from all his creatures, that glory,
 which is due for ever! Amen.

CHAP.
XII.

1. 2. Let me exhort you, therefore, my brethren, to live
 3. worthy of this holy call. Whether Jews, or Gen-
 tiles, relinquish intirely your former rites; and in
 their room offer to God each his own body, as a
 living sacrifice, cleansed from the pollutions of the
 world; and purified by holy affections.—Nor on
 the other hand, let your spiritual endowments create
 any pride, or jealousy among you. The church of
 Christ, like the human body, consists of various
 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. members; and each member hath it's respective
 use. One interprets scripture: another bears some
 office in the church: a third is engaged in teaching:
 a fourth distributes the public charity: a fifth takes
 9. 10. charge of the sick, and stranger. Whatever the
 employment be, let undissembled love preside: and
 shew the sincerity of that love by your readiness on
 11. all occasions, to prefer others to yourselves. Be active
 also, and vigilant; always remembering that heaven-
 12. ly Master, whom you serve. Let your future hopes
 overbalance your present distresses; and let trust in
 13. 14. 15. God, and constant prayer be your support. When
 16. a charitable office of any kind is in your power, never
 fail to perform it. Prayers, and good wishes, at least,

are

are always in your power: at all times you ought to enter tenderly into the feelings of others: and let the lowest of the people engage your attention, as well as the highest.—But beware of self-sufficiency. 17. 18. 19. Let all your dealings be honest, and fair, and open in the sight of all men. Of malice in every shape divest yourselves. Live peaceably, and inoffensively towards all men; and if any man injure you, by no means retaliate. Return good for evil; and leave your cause in the hands of God. Endeavour if possible, by acts of kindness, to make your enemy a friend. 20. 21.

As to the affairs of civil government, the Christian religion leaves them just as it found them. It claims no authority in matters of this kind; only in general inculcates the necessity of obedience. Civil government is of God's appointment. The constitution of this world requires it. It is neces-

CHAP.
XIII.

1. 2. 3. 4.

13. The apostle *here* mentions hospitality, which duly defined, is certainly a virtue *every where*; but in those countries, where places of entertainment were not always to be met with, it was a more necessary virtue, than in such a country as this, where many things take the name of *hospitality*, which have no pretensions to it. The apostle defines it by the expression, *distributing to necessity*; which is certainly the only true definition of it. You *give alms*, to those who are in *indigence*; you are *hospitable* to those, who, tho not in indigence, are under some temporary *necessity*, from which you can relieve them.

20. *Heaping coals of fire* is a sentiment taken from Prov. xxv. 21. St. Austin explains it from the idea of melting metal in a furnace: and in the turn of the expression in the 21st verse the apostle *seems* to have had the same idea.

fary

- fary to awe the guilty, and protect the innocent. He therefore who opposes civil government, opposes
5. God. Let the Christian therefore only differ from other subjects, in shewing that obedience from
6. 7. *conscience*, which they shew from *fear*†.—Taxes also are the necessary support of government. Let these, together with a proper respect to all in au-
8. 9. 10. thority, be duly paid. And be assured, that he will always be the best subject, who is the best Christian. For that universal benevolence, which Christianity prescribes, will the most effectually prevent the transgression of every law; and of course the most

† These cautions are chiefly given to the Jewish converts, many of whom still thought the *chosen people of God* were subject only to his government; and had nothing to do with heathen governments. The apostle's instructions therefore respect not *this*, or *that mode* of government; but government in *general*; and cannot with any propriety, be brought to support the slavish doctrines of passive obedience, and non-resistance. The Christian in his *civil capacity*, like other men, will act as his judgment directs; only his religion, which gives him many new principles, will direct his judgment better; and in this matter, as in all others, will give him more modesty, and forbearance.

6. The refusal of paying taxes was the origin of the rebellion of Judas of Galilee; from whom Christians had often the name of Galileans given them by the heathen; and were represented as a people hostile to all government, and its necessary supports. St. Paul therefore studiously obviates this slander.—It was under an idea of this kind, that the Jews brought to our Saviour the question about tribute-money.

13. Some whimsical interpreters translate *κοιταίς* (which we translate *chambering*) *lying in bed in a morning*. It is certain, if there be no direct precept in scripture, to enforce early rising, it may easily be inferred. An hour or two gained in a morning, makes a greater difference in a life-time, than one should easily suppose, without making a calculation.

effectually

effectually fulfil it.—We Christians have motives beyond all other people to draw us to our duty. The night of this world is well nigh over. We consider the day as beginning to dawn. Let us then lay aside whatever relates to darkness; and make preparation only for the approaching light.

11.

12. 13. 14.

CHAP.
XIV.

1. 2. 3. 4.

One point more let me insist on. As the Christian church among you consists both of Jewish, and Gentile converts, let all uncharitable animosities with regard to religious opinions be laid aside. He, who makes no distinction among meats, ought not to despise him who is more scrupulous, and cannot at once lay his scruples aside. He is not accountable to man; and in the sight of a gracious God, these externals are of little consequence.—Thus again, he who makes no distinction among days, should treat his brother, who does make a distinction, with the same forbearance. For I trust that every one of you, in these things, follows the dictates of his conscience; not acting on any

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6. 7. 8. 9.

14. How strongly the apostle expresses his sense, in saying, *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* Be ye cloathed as it were with him. Plutarch tells us, that the kings of Persia always put on, at their coronation, the robe of Cyrus, by way of shewing the people, they intended to imitate his virtues.

1. *Μη εις διακρίσεις διαλογισμων*, should be rather *not to form judgments of his thoughts*; than, as our version has it, *not to doubtful disputations*.

3. By *him that eateth*, the apostle probably means the less scrupulous Gentile; and by *him that eateth not*, the more scrupulous Jew.

sinister

10. 11. 12. sinister motive; but from a sense of that obligation to religious duty, which the death and resurrection of his blessed Saviour have laid upon him.—Lay aside therefore all uncharitableness about these indifferent matters; and leave your brother's conduct to the judgment of God, who will call us all to a righteous account. Instead therefore of being offended at the conduct of others, take care to be inoffensive in your own. I am myself persuaded, that a Christian may safely eat any kind of food; but he, who is not so persuaded, ought to refrain. And even he, who hath no scruple of his own, ought by no means to give offence to him, who hath one; nor subject the holy religion he professes, to any uncharitable aspersions. For tho' the spirit of the gospel is little concerned in these indifferent matters; yet it is very essentially concerned in maintaining peace, and charity, and happiness among Christians. These are the things, which make you useful to each other, and acceptable to God.—Cultivate then this peaceable disposition, as the best mean of mutual improvement. For however indifferent these things may be in themselves; yet, as he acts wrong, who in the merest trifle acts against his conscience; so of course he acts equally wrong, who thus turns a trifle into a matter of offence. Be satisfied then with the

23. Our translation expresses the original too strongly. *He that doubteth, is damned, if he eat.* The apostle only means to express

the liberty you allow yourselves: only be careful, that religion, and conscience allow it likewise: for in all cases of this kind, *doubt is guilt.*

Nor is it only in the matter of meats, but in every thing else, you should be ready to bear with the weaknesses of others. Remember the blessed example of our Saviour. Remember, how particularly marked it is by the prophets for a humble and charitable submission to the weaknesses of others. Learn then from these great characters, thus marked by the prophets, and fulfilled by Christ, those principles of Christian charity, which are the foundation of all your hopes. And may God Almighty enable you to reduce them to practice; that your petitions to God may ascend from hearts full of love to each other!—In a word, shew that affection to each other, which Christ shewed to us all. Let the Gentile respect the Jew; as Christ was in a peculiar manner the Messiah of the Jews by fulfilling the predictions of their prophets. And let the Jew respect the Gentile; as he equally fulfils the predictions of the same prophets; who have with one voice notified his gracious call to the blessings of the gospel.—God grant, that you may all believe

CHAP.
XV.

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express the wrongness of any action, about which we doubt. *Damned* should be translated *condemned*; or in his own conscience convicted.

9. 10. 11. 12. The prophecies referred to, which announce the call of the Gentiles, are Ps. xviii. 49. Deut. xxxii. 43. Ps. cxvii. 1. Isa. xi. 10.

the

- the great truths of the gospel; and rejoice in it's
 14. blessed hopes, with unanimity, and peace! And
 tho I doubt not your kindness to each other, even
 15. among your religious differences; yet as your apostle,
 I thought it right to mention these things,
 16. Like the priest of the Jewish law, I consider myself
 as offering to God the sacrifice of the Gentile world.
 17. 18. But all glorying with regard to myself, is totally
 suppressed by a sense of God's grace, under which I
 19. act. My own power is nothing. I act merely by
 the power of God; which hath enabled me by miracles
 to spread the gospel through many of the
 20. 21. countries of Greece; in all which I have applied myself
 to those only, who had never heard of the gospel
 before; that I might take all the labour to myself;
 and according to the prophet, preach to such, as had
 never been instructed.
22. On this account, my design of visiting you hath
 hitherto been prevented; tho I hope I shall soon see
 23. 24. you, as my ministry in these parts is now finished.
 I mean to take a journey into Spain; and I propose
 to visit you in my way thither; both that I may
 gratify my own affection, and yours; and that I
 may receive your assistance in proceeding farther.
 25. 26. 27. But I shall go first to Jerusalem. The Greek Christians
 28. have raised a contribution for their poor brethren
 there, and I shall go thither to present it.

When I shall have disposed of this charity (if I may call by that name, what, in a spiritual light, is indeed rather a debt) I shall immediately begin my journey to Spain; and I doubt not, but I shall have reason to meet you in all the fulness of apostolic love.—In the mean time, my brethren, unite with me in prayer, that I may be protected in all difficulties, and dangers arising from unbelievers—that I may perform my commission acceptably at Jerusalem—and meet you through God's will, in peace and love. And may the God of peace be with you all: Amen.

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30. 31. 32.

33.

29. Who can help admiring, with what ease the holy apostle, now advanced in years, talks of travelling, not from one town, or district to another; but from continent to continent? When St. Paul wrote this epistle, he was most probably, at Corinth; and proposed first to go to Jerusalem; and from thence by Rome into Spain. In what way this journey was undertaken, we are not given to understand. If the whole of it were performed by sea; at the lowest calculation it must have extended three thousand miles: if by land, almost double that space. But however performed, we cannot suppose it to have been very commodious. If we judge from the apostle's general account of his travels, the difficulties which he encountered, both by sea, and land, must have been very great. "In journeyings often—in perils of water—in perils of robbers—in perils in the sea—in perils in the wilderness. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A day, and a night I have been in the deep. In weariness, and painfulness—in watchings often—in hunger and thirst; in cold, and nakedness." 2 Cor. xi. 26, &c.

Good God, enable the present ministers of thy word to keep these labours of thy holy apostle so far at least in view, as to prevent their considering many things in their profession as insuperable difficulties, which to him would not have appeared in the light of inconveniences!

CHAP.
XVI.

1. 2. I commend to your particular attention the bearer of this epistle, Phœbe, a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea; who hath been of great service to many here; and to myself in particular. I desire also to be remembered, with kind affection, to all the brethren with you, whose various services are highly acceptable to me: and may that affection, which I shew to you, spread equally among yourselves!
- 3—15.
- 16.
17. 18. 19.
- 20.
21. 22. 23.
- Avoid communication with such persons, as teach any doctrine contrary to what you have received; and let not their interested, and deceitful views impose upon you. The purity of your conversion is every where mentioned; and I hope you will not suffer the artifices of designing men to mislead you. God's Holy Spirit will support your endeavours; and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ever rest upon you!—All the brethren here salute you.

1. Cenchrea was a village near Corinth.

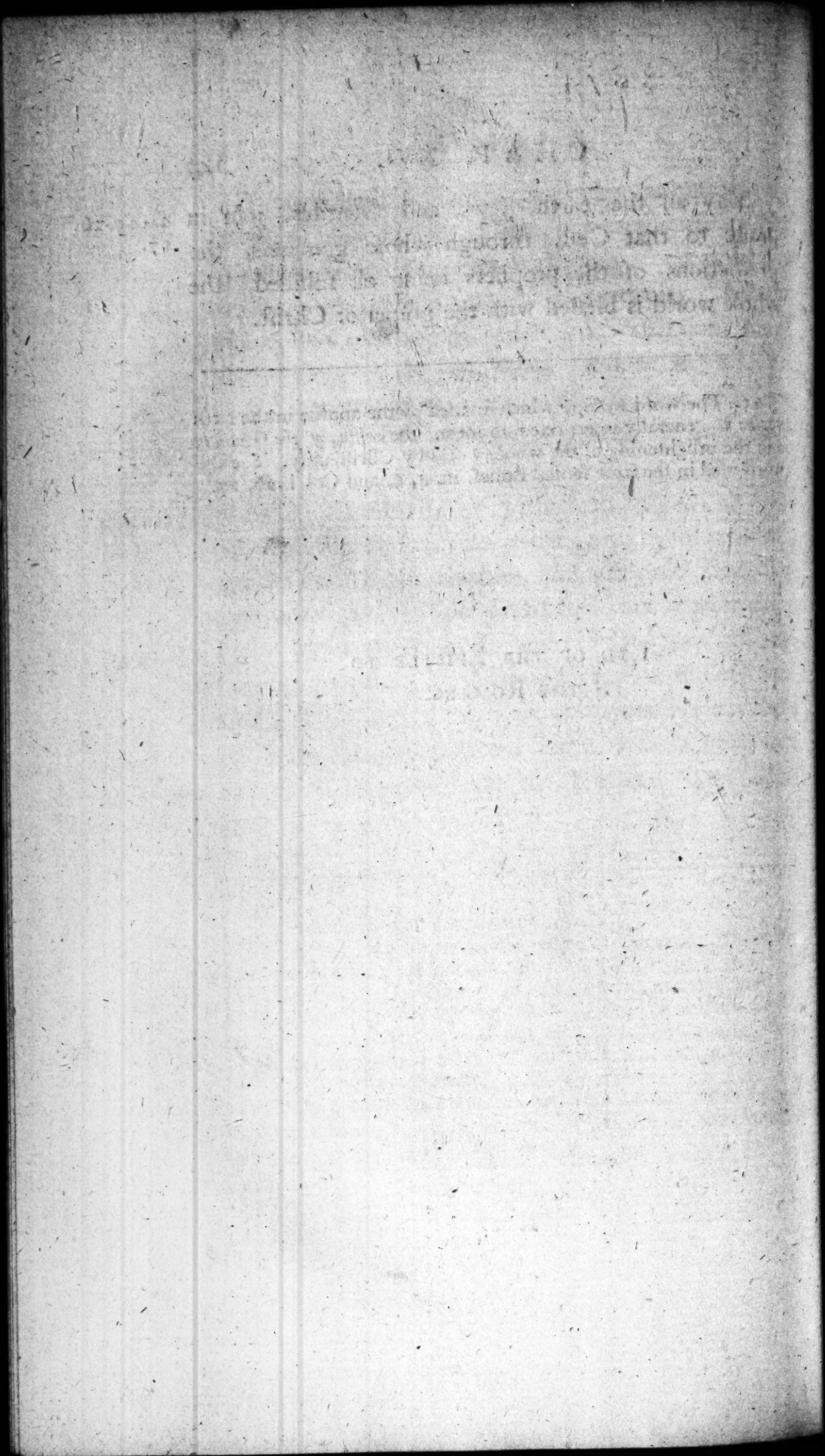
15. In these verses the apostle, with an engaging condescension, enumerates these brethren by name, which must have been a very pleasing remembrance to them; tho to us, at this day, it is less interesting.—Among others whom the apostle salutes, are Priscilla, and Aquila, *who had for his life laid down their own necks*. See an account of their being with him during the persecution he suffered in Greece. Acts xviii, &c.

16. The *holy kiss* mentioned in this verse was a Jewish custom. It seems to have given early occasion of offence in the Christian church; and was therefore laid aside.

May all the earth, Jews, and Gentiles, join in ^{24. 25. 26.} praise to that God, through whose goodness, the ^{27.} predictions of the prophets being all fulfilled, the whole world is blessed with the gospel of Christ.

25. The word *mystery*, which is used by the apostle in the 25th verse, is generally interpreted to mean, the *calling of the Gentiles*; and the inlightening of the whole world by Christianity. See the word used in the same sense, Ephes. iii. 4, 9, and Col. i. 26, 27.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO
THE ROMANS.



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P R E F A C E

FIRST, AND SECOND.

EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CORINTH was a city of Achaia, seated on that neck of land which joined Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece. Its situation, on two seas, was well adapted to commerce; and made it one of the wealthiest cities in the world. But wealth had the effect there, which it always has; and Corinth, as it increased in opulence, increased also in dissipation, and wickedness. To this great city however the labours of St. Paul were directed: and here, amidst all the profligacy, and corrupt manners of the place, he founded a Christian church; and through his influence, drew over many converts to the truth. In completing this great work he continued at Corinth two years.

Three years after he left it, he wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians, as it is generally supposed, from Ephesus; the greater part of which appears to be an answer to several questions, they had put to him.

The apostle first expresses his happiness in the general adherence of his converts to their religion, page, 149—he finds fault with their divisions, 150—gives them a plain idea of the gospel, opposed chiefly to the philosophy of the world, 150—vindicates his own mode of preaching it; and shews, that a knowledge of it's divine truths can never be attained without the assistance of the Spirit of God—and that divisions, and worldly ideas are wholly opposite to it, 152—touches on the life of an apostle, from which he infers his sincerity, 158—rebukes them on the account of an incestuous person, whom he excommunicates; giving them some instructions with regard to their heathen neighbours, 159—gives them rules with regard to their worldly disputes, 161—cautions them against the vices, and impurities, to which they had been formerly addicted, 162—The apostle proceeds next to answer several questions, that had been put to him. The first relates to marriage; particularly between Christians, and heathen. The discussion of this question is contained in the seventh chapter.—In the three next chapters he answers a second question; Whether it be lawful for Christians to eat meats offered to idols in an idol-temple? He first, in the eighth chapter, shews the inexpediency of it, as it may mislead weak Christians. In the ninth, he gives an example in himself of many things, which he avoids as inexpedient. In the tenth he shews how an attachment to these idol-feasts had led the Jews formerly into sin: they *sat down to eat and drink*, at the sacrifices of idols; and then *rose up to play*; or to commit fornication. He then points out to his converts, that Christians might in the same way be led from eating in idol-temple, to the practice of heathen abominations. At the fifteenth verse, the apostle uses a new argument, shewing the impropriety of eating in an idol-temple, as
the

P R E F A C E.

iii

the sign of communicating with an idol, is the same as that of communicating with Christ; namely eating at his table. The apostle concludes his argument with shewing, at the twenty-fifth verse, in what circumstances idol-meats may lawfully be eaten.—In the eleventh chapter, two points are discussed—the first relates to the behaviour of women in public assemblies:—the second, beginning at the seventeenth verse, to the improper celebration of the Lord's supper.—It appears from the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters, that the chiefs of the Corinthian church were suffering emulation, and strife, and vying with each other, to creep in among their spiritual labours; and particularly that they were fond of displaying the gift of tongues. All these improprieties the apostle represses.—In the fifteenth chapter, he explains the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; on which subject many erroneous opinions had been entertained among the Corinthian converts.—In the last chapter, he gives instructions about their collections for the poor; and then concludes.

On the reading of this epistle at Corinth, the incestuous person was excommunicated; and many, from his example, were brought to a sense of their duty. Yet still the apostle found opposition. He had promised, after his journey to Macedonia, to visit Corinth: but finding the Corinthian converts still in such disorder, that he could not appear among them, without exerting more severity, than he chose, he postponed his journey. This occasioned new grounds of opposition. The apostle was represented as an unsteady man.—This was the state of the Corinthian church, when he wrote his second epistle, about a year after he had written the former. He introduces

introduces it with an account of the sufferings he had lately undergone ; and of his sincerity in preaching the gospel, 195—he then gives the reason of his writing, instead of visiting them, as he had intended, 196—he forgives the incestuous person, 198—professes his great affection for his converts, 198—dwells on the difficulty, and yet dignity, of preaching the gospel ; the views, and hopes, and worldly distresses, that attend it, 199—of the universality of the gospel ; and of the seeming contradictions, which are reconciled in it, 204—exhorts his converts to separate intirely from all heathen practices, 205—expresses his regard for the attention they paid to his last epistle, 207—reminds them to make collections for the poor ; and gives them an account of the disciples he sends to them, 208—vindicates himself ; and speaks of his own labours in the gospel, and of his power to punish his adversaries, if he pleased, 212—raises his character among them, by a recital of the visions he had had, 216—vindicates himself still farther ; and concludes, 218.

FIRST EPISTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

PAUL, (by the particular appointment of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ,) together with Sosthenes; to the Christian church at Corinth, and to all other Christians—grace and peace from God in Christ!

Your happy conversion to the Christian religion; and your having been so bountifully endowed with those gifts, through which your faith was at first confirmed, are among the chief subjects of my thankfulness to God. That communication, which you enjoy, of these divine blessings, is, I trust, sufficient to preserve you pure unto the great day of our Lord. Be faithful on your parts; and you may

CHAP.

I.

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2. The expression, *all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ*, seems to point him out as an object of worship.

be assured of the acceptance of that God, who hath called you to salvation by his Son.

10. 11.

But tho in general I thus commend you, I must at the same time reprove several of you for the various divisions, which, I hear, are subsisting among you; and which are very opposite to the spirit of the

12.

gospel. You are dividing into different sects—one under Paul—another under Apollos—and a third

13.

under Peter.—Do you then suppose there is any diversity in the religion of the gospel? Did Paul die for your sins? Or were you baptized in his

14. 15. 16.

name? As this is the case, I am truly glad, that I baptized so few among you. Crispus, and Gaius, and the family of Stephanus, are all that I remember. So that there can be no pretence for saying,

17.

I baptized in my own name. For I was commissioned not so much to baptize; as to preach the gospel in simplicity, and truth.

18.

The simplicity of the cross indeed, which hath ever been my subject, tho it is the great foundation

10. The apostle passes here without any interruption from commendation to blame. His sense is easy: but a modern ear requires some such connecting sentence, as I have here introduced.

12. Many commentators suppose the latter clause of the sentence, *and I of Christ*, is an interpolation. The sense indeed seems better without it: for all the Corinthian converts, no doubt, listed *under Christ*; but held his doctrines under different leaders.—Mr. Markland, instead of *Christus*, would read *Crispus*.

of

of all our hopes, is little understood by worldly men. To them the prophet alludes, when he says; *Behold I will do a marvellous thing among this people. The wisdom of their wise men shall perish; and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*—

To what end indeed does the philosophy, and wisdom of this world lead us? When it pretends to conduct us in religious matters, it is vanity, and folly. For after the world had, through ages, shewn it's weakness and ignorance in acquiring divine truth; it pleased God at once, through the simplicity of the gospel, to display his heavenly wisdom; and to offer salvation to all, who were disposed to receive it. But the wisdom of the world, as I observed, is little adapted to this divine knowledge. The unbelieving Jew views the Messiah only as a temporal prince; and the Greek listens merely to such instructions, as are decked with the refinements of philosophy: while the doctrine of the gospel, which lies in these few words, *Christ was crucified for sinners*, however offensive to both, will be

19. Isa. xxix. 14.

21. This is the same sentiment, on which the apostle only dilated more, in the first chapter of the Romans.

22. In the text it is, *the Jews require a sign*. In our Saviour's time they were always requiring a sign. And in the time of the apostles, it seems they were still making the same requisition. What kind of signs, they were now in quest of, their countryman Josephus tells us. False Christs, says he, deceived the people by promising them *σημεια σωτηριας*, *the signs of deliverance from the Romans*.

24. The text *perhaps* applies the power of God to the Jews; and the wisdom of God to the Greeks.

25. found on just examination their truest wisdom. For simple as the great designs of Providence may appear; the utmost wisdom of man is feeble, when it
26. 27. 28. presumes to judge of them.—And hence it is, that so few of the philosophers, and wise men of this world, have embraced the gospel; while through the
29. goodness of God, it's great truths are open to men of plain understanding, of teachable minds, and good dispositions. And this is ordered in such a way, that all the serious part of mankind may know, that the hand of man hath had nothing to do in this great work; but that it was planned, and conducted
30. solely by God.—You then, my brethren, are justified, sanctified, and redeemed through Christ; and having given up the wisdom of the world, and accepted, through God's goodness, Christ for your
31. wisdom, shall be among those, of whom the prophet speaks, *Let them that glory, glory in the Lord.*

CHAP.
II.

I. 2.

For myself, I ever preached the gospel in it's true simplicity. All the arts of worldly wisdom I have

27. 28. St. Paul's doctrine here, seems the same as in Luke viii. 15, *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest, and good heart, having, &c.*

31. Jer. ix. 23, 24.

1. *Declaring unto you the testimony of God:* that is, the proof of religion from the prophecies of the Old Testament and from miracles.

2. The idea of a crucified redeemer, was the great stumbling-block. On it therefore, as the foundation-stone, the apostle lays the greatest stress. It is said to have given equal offence in China; and some authors relate, that the Jesuit missionaries there finding, how

have disclaimed. *Jesus Christ, crucified for sinners,* has been my constant subject; and I have preached this among you, with all the tenderness, and anxiety, which a serious pastor will always feel. Instead of the arts of philosophy, I have enforced this great doctrine by the demonstration of the Spirit: and have shewn you, that your faith does not rest on any thing human; but on prophecy, and miracles, which are derived from God. The gospel is wisdom indeed; but of a different kind from the perishing wisdom of this world. Tho' hid through ages, it was determined from the beginning of the world. But even after it was opened, it escaped the discernment of the Jewish doctors; or they would never have crucified their Messiah.—But it is no wonder; for the divine truths it teaches, are conveyed to us in a manner wholly different from every kind of knowledge, which we receive through our senses—even by the Spirit of God, which alone can fathom his designs. As the spirit of a man only

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11.

how ill it was received, denied that Jesus Christ had been crucified; asserting it was an aspersion of the Jews. This charge against the Jesuits, whether true or not, Archbp. Tillotson seems to have believed. See vol. III. p. 248.—The words, *καὶ τὸν σταυρωμένον*, might be translated, *even that crucified person.*

9. This passage, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c.* is generally applied to the happiness of a future state. It is no doubt a noble description of that happiness, and very applicable to it; but the context here certainly affixes a different sense to it.—It is generally supposed to allude to II. lxiv. 4. With regard to the difficulties attending this supposition, see Bp. Lowth's note on the passage.

can

can search the secrets of his own heart ; so nothing but God's own Spirit can explain the ways of his providence. This Spirit we have received. From it's influence, not from worldly science, our knowledge arises : and through it we explain the free grace of God—not in the terms of philosophy ; but in the language of the Holy Ghost ; shewing you, that the same divine Spirit, which spake by the holy prophets of old, now speaks in the gospel.——But mere unassisted reason could never discern these things. He only, who is assisted by God's Spirit, can discern them. The mere natural man, continually makes false judgments both of men, and things. For as the prophet says, *Who hath known the mind of the Lord?* None surely, but whom the Lord hath instructed. So none can explain the will of God in Christ ; but such as are under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

But perhaps you may think, I have not opened to you, (as others have done) the sublimer doctrines of religion.——You are yet unable to bear them. As the new-born babe cannot be fed with strong food ; but must at first, be sustained with milk ; so

15. Solomon's sentiment is nearly the same, as the apostle's: *Evil men understand not judgment ; but they that seek the Lord, understand all things.* Prov. xxviii. 5.

16. The apostle alludes here either to Isaiah xl. 13, or to Jerem. xxiii. 18.

have

have I been obliged to treat you. You have not yet attained the spirit of the gospel. These envyings, strifes, and party-divisions among you, under Paul, and Apollos, plainly shew, that your conversion is not yet compleat. Are Paul, and Apollos, think you, more than mere ministers of the gospel? I first planted it among you; and Apollos succeeded to my labours: but neither he nor I, are more than mere labourers under God; engaged in the same employment; and equally accountable. We are all fellow-workmen: God is our master; and you are the land we cultivate: or, to use another allusion, you are the building which I have founded; the superstructure I leave to others. The foundation can be laid only in Christ. He who moveth that, engageth intirely in a new building. And as to the superstructure, whether it be good, or bad, let the

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12.

3. 4. On reading these passages, we are immediately struck with the seeming impropriety of their having received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, (as it plainly appears, they had from the 12th and 14th chapters,) tho they had not yet attained the spirit of the gospel. But it is evident from various parts of scripture, that there were two distinct operations of the Holy Spirit—one, as it related to the edification of the church; the other, as it regarded the sanctification of the individual: and sometimes one alone, and sometimes both together, resided in the same person. Balaam, and Judas Iscariot were notorious instances of the first case; the gifts of the Spirit residing in them for the advantage of the church, without the conveyance of any sanctifying grace. To this case also St. Paul alludes: *Tho I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

9. Συμργοι Θεου, mean rather fellow-labourers under God; than, as translated, labourers together with God.

workman

- workman awfully wait the issue of that great day,
 13. 14. which shall bring his work to the test. If it be
 found suitable to the foundation; it is well: he will
 15. meet his reward. But if it be found the reverse,
 his work perishes; and he himself also, unless his
 good intentions may plead to save him.
 16. Consider farther, that the Christian church is now
 substituted in the room of the Jewish. *It* is now the
 temple of God. *Here* God's Holy Spirit rests, as it
 17. did *there*. Consider then the great danger of injuring
 the holy temple of God by your divisions; and re-
 flect, that you yourselves are now the members,
 18. which constitute that holy temple. Be not then
 19. deceived by the wisdom of this world. He who
 would rest his knowledge, on that foundation, which
 I have described, must be contented to unlearn much
 of what he knows, before he arrive at the simplicity
 of the gospel; in comparison of which the wisdom

13. This is very coldly translated. It should not be *the day*; but *that day*; or *the great day*.—Fire seems to be considered in this passage, not in allusion to any great, eternal fire: but merely as a test. As fire is the test of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: so the great day will be the test of every man's work.

15. St. Jude (ver. 23) uses the same metaphor: *Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire*.

17. The word *deceives* in this verse is repeated; and is translated first *defiled*, and afterwards *destroyed*; both which senses it will bear: but to preserve the figure, it should be confined to one. The idea seems to be, that Christians, as a body, composed the temple of God. Divisions among them is a disunion among the parts of the temple. The consequence is, the destruction of the whole.

19. See Job v. 13, and Ps. xciv. 11.

of this world is folly. For *the wise*, we are told,
are taken in *their own craftiness*; and again *the Lord*
knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

20.

—Let there be an end therefore of all boasting,
and glorying in this, or that leader. You have
higher aims. All your instructors in religion; all
your possessions in this world, and hopes in the next,
should lead you only to one great point—that holy
connection, which you have with Christ; and through
him, with God.

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23.

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2.

Even we, who are the appointed apostles of the
gospel, look upon ourselves in no higher light, than
as the stewards of our blessed Lord. For myself,
if I be found faithful in my office, it is all I desire.
As to the censures passed on me by others, they have
little weight with me. I am more inclined to join
them in censuring myself. For tho I am not con-
scious of having neglected my apostolic trust; yet
my own sentiments are no justification of my actions.

3.

4.

—Let us not then be forward in passing censures
on each other: but leave all judgment to that time,
when a very different light shall be thrown on the
characters of men, from any they now receive:
when the motives of our actions shall be examined,
and every man's real deserts appear in the sight of
God.

5.

22. With what elevation of faith does the apostle here consider
death among the *possessions* of a Christian!

4. Οὐδὲν ἑμαυτῷ οὐνοῖδα signifies rather *I am not conscious*; than as
it is translated, *I know nothing by myself.*

Thus

6. Thus I have said what I wish to say to you on your several divisions, and the consequences of them. I have not mentioned names; but have substituted my own, and those of Apollos, and Peter; that I might not too openly point at any one; and that your party-leaders may reflect, that if *we* disclaim
7. any separate authority; much more should *they*. Let them humble themselves therefore; and consider the gifts they have received, as given them by God.
8. Sincerely do I wish those high pretensions of yours were founded in truth; and that I might change my anxious, suffering state for your secure, and happy one. Look at us the apostles of Christ. Who can see us in any other light, than as spectacles prepared for the ridicule, and cruelty of the world?
10. While we are fools in the general estimation of men; you join worldly prudence, and the cross together: while we are weak; you are strong: while you are honoured; we are despised. Examine the life of an
- 11, 12. apostle. See the distresses of all kinds, to which we are exposed—even to the want of the very necessities
13. of life, which we endeavour to supply with the labour of our hands: bearing the many indignities we receive, not only with patience; but with a dis-

6. I have endeavoured to pursue the connection here as well as I could, tho the text is somewhat obscure. As to the sentence beginning with *and*; that copulative is frequent, when it is merely an expletive.

8. *Reigning as kings* seems to refer to the influence these leaders had obtained over the people.

position

position to return good for evil.—I mention not
 however these things to distress you: but to revive
 in you that tenderness, which is due from children
 to a parent. I was the first, who opened the gospel
 to you: and have certainly the first claim to your
 attention.—And that you may be fully confirmed
 in that faith, which I once delivered unto you, and
 preach in all the churches, I send my beloved Timo-
 thy unto you, with this epistle; who is, in all respects,
 a faithful minister of our blessed Lord. My thus
 sending a substitute may contribute to excite divisions
 still more among you, on a supposition, that I mean
 not to come myself. But be assured, I do mean to
 come myself; and shall examine, not the philosophy,
 and worldly wisdom—but the gospel-spirit, and tem-
 per, of such as oppose us. For it is not the learning
 of men; but the fruits of the Spirit, that make the
 true Christian.—You have an option therefore,
 whether I shall come among you with the mildness
 of a father; or with the power of an apostle.

14. 15.

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CHAP.
V.

Having thus censured your various divisions, I
 shall now censure you still more on another head.

I hear

1.

21. The expression, *shall I come unto you with a rod*, is supposed to allude to the exertion of those extraordinary apostolic powers, which were sometimes exercised; as in the death of Ananias, and Sapphira.

1. It appears from many passages of St. Paul's epistles, that the lusts of the flesh (so much indulged among the heathen) were among those, on which the purity of the gospel precepts had least effect.

- I hear there hath been practised among you a very enormous kind of wickedness; and what is not heard of even among Gentiles—that one of you hath had
2. a connection with his father's wife; and that others, instead of making it a general cause of mourning, and separating themselves from so vile a person; seem rather to defend him in his wickedness.—
3. Tho absent, I take upon me, through the authority of the Holy Ghost, to decide in this matter. I
4. command therefore, that, on the receipt of this epistle, you gather the congregation together; and
5. in the name of Jesus Christ, solemnly expel this person from your communion; that he may see the heinousness of his sin, and after a sincere repentance be restored to God's favour.—As for your defend-
6. ing him in his wickedness, it is an immediate step towards being corrupted yourselves. You are under
7. 8. a necessity therefore on your own account to remove this pernicious example. Consider your blessed Saviour's death, and preserve yourselves as free as possible from sin, which was the cause of it.

effect. At Corinth in particular, the manners of the people were so corrupted, that *κοινή διαζευ*, was a vulgar expression for leading a loose irregular life. Yet still incest was seldom heard of among the heathen. Cicero somewhere calls it, *scelus incredibile, et inauditum*.

7. *Purge out therefore the old leaven.* St. Paul, in this passage, alludes to a custom prescribed by the Jewish law (see Deut. xvi. 4) of cleansing their houses from leaven, before the celebration of the passover.

But

But tho I have thus given you strict injunctions not to communicate with any person, whose life is notoriously stained with impurities; yet I must restrict what I say, to your own society: for as to your heathen neighbours, many of whose lives are thus stained, it is impossible for you intirely to avoid an intercourse with them. We must leave them therefore to the judgment of God. But over our own brethren we may exercise more strictness.—I command you therefore once more to excommunicate this wicked person.

This leads me to add another injunction. I greatly disapprove your carrying disputes before heathen magistrates; and would have you always decide them among themselves. You have heard what our blessed Saviour said with regard to his saints judging the world. If such honour be assigned them, are they not fit, think you, to determine the trifling things of this life? In such matters I should suppose, that even the meanest member of a Christian church might be a sufficient judge. How shameful

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10. 11.

12. 13.

CHAP.
VI.

1.

2. 3.

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9. The word *εἰς* here, is thought by many not to refer to any past letter; but to the present one. St. Chrysostom particularly interprets it thus.

2. See a note on Matt. xix. 28, in which I suppose this expression with regard to judging the world, is figurative. This however hinders not, why St. Paul might not allude to it, as an inforcement of his argument. That the expression is figurative, seems plain; because otherwise the apostle's argument requires us to suppose that these Corinthian converts themselves, as well as the apostles, were to judge the world; *If the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*

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M

therefore

- therefore is it, that even the wisest among you is
6. not able to decide a trifling controversy; but that Christians, who ought to give an example of mildness, forbearance, and gentleness to others, should not only quarrel among themselves; but even carry
7. their disputes before heathen judicatories? You must surely see how contrary this is to real Christianity; and that if you fulfilled your profession, you ought rather to suffer an injury, than by such means to
8. 9. redress it.—But I fear there are other great wrongnesses of practice among you; and together with the impurities, of which I have just been speaking;
10. there are excesses of another kind—covetousness, extortion, and dishonesty, which lead you into these unchristian contentions among yourselves, and equally exclude you from all hopes of inheriting the blessings
11. of the gospel. Once, no doubt, many of you were deeply immersed in all these vices: but you should consider, that you have been called to a state of holiness—and that you have been baptized, and sanctified through the Holy Spirit.
12. Preserve yourselves therefore in that purity; and particularly with regard to abstaining from the lusts of the flesh, use such means, as are most conducive to this end. Many things are useful in the degree; but ruinous in the excess; especially if they have
13. any tendency to inflame the mind. A temperate use of food is highly necessary; which, you should always remember, is designed merely for the ends, and purposes of this life.—The natural dignity of the

the human body also, which is created for the Lord, places the guilt of impure affections in a strong light. The same God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, will raise up our bodies also.—We should farther consider ourselves as the members of Christ. Shall we then pollute the members of Christ with deeds of uncleanness?—We should even consider our bodies as the temples of the Holy Ghost. Let us not then, by polluting them, pollute those temples.—Lastly, we should consider ourselves, as redeemed, and bought with a price. Let us then, in body and spirit, glorify that God, to whom we belong.

14.

15. 16. 17.

18. 19.

20.

CHAP.
VII.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

I shall proceed now to answer the several questions, you have proposed.—The first relates to marriage; which, in the present state of the church, I should not greatly encourage. To prevent however such impurities, as are practised among the heathen, every one ought to be left at perfect liberty in this matter. I give you at least my own private opinion in advising that restraint, which I practise myself.—But

6. 7. 8. 9.

10. 11.

1. This chapter seems to relate to questions asked by some converts, who had been bred up with an idea of the lawfulness of fornication; and who little understood the nature of the marriage contract. As it respects chiefly the circumstances of the Corinthian church; and particularly marriage contracts between Christians, and heathen, I have contented myself with preserving the apostle's general argument.—His restriction of marriage, was certainly meant only as a temporary caution; (see ver. 26) for St. Paul is otherwise an advocate for marriage; and considers *forbidding to marry*, as one of the signs of heresy.

M 2

with

with regard to a marriage once entered into, it is the plain command of our blessed Lord, that there shall be no separation, except for the cause of adultery. If any separation take place on slighter grounds, and either party marry again, such a marriage is adultery.

12. 13. 14.
15. 16.

But in this new question, which you have put to me, and on which our Lord hath not given you his injunctions, I will give you mine. In a marriage between a Christian, and a heathen, if the heathen party wish to continue the union, there ought to be no objection on the other side: for the religious sentiments of the Christian may draw over the heathen. Besides, such union affords the best hope of bringing up your children in the Christian faith. If however, on this religious difference, a separation be chosen by the heathen party, let it take place. Religion is certainly a much more sacred tie, than marriage. Only let every thing of this kind be accompanied with mildness, and tenderness.

17. 18. 19.
20. 21. 22.
23. 24.

And here let me remind you of what I have earnestly taught in all places, where I have planted the gospel; that the Christian religion is intended to

15. But tho a separation may take place, I presume the apostle does not authorize a *second marriage*. The reason of the separation seems to be, lest the man, or woman, being carried among their heathen relations, should be seduced from their religion.

23. *Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men.* The apostle's argument is, *Ye are bought with a still higher price than your earthly master paid for you; consider yourselves therefore rather as the servants of your heavenly, than of your earthly master.*

make

make no change in the civil rights, or outward circumstances of men.—The Jew, and the heathen are equally called: the circumcision of one, and the uncircumcision of the other, make no difference.—The master and the slave are equally called: the bondage of the one, and the freedom of the other, make no difference. If however the slave can have his liberty, let him accept it. But even a state of bondage may be endured on Christian principles: the master should esteem himself Christ's bondman, and the slave should consider himself as Christ's freedman. Whatever your outward circumstances of life may be; you are all equally bought with a price; and all equally belong to Christ.

You will consider therefore (to return to my subject) that I only mean to discourage marriage among you, on account of the inexpediency of it, during the present distressed state of the church; and that what I have said on that subject, is merely from myself, without any express command from the Lord. Let no man conceive me to suppose any sinfulness in the married state: all I say, is, that

25. 26. 27.
28.

25. Most interpreters make this paragraph the beginning of a new subject. To me it appears with most force as a repetition of what the apostle had said in the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of this chapter; with a view to sum up the whole argument, from the consideration of the instability of human things. The eight verses therefore, from the 17th, to the 25th, are a digression, addressed to a prevailing opinion among the Jews, that the Christian religion dissolved all civil ties, as well as heathen marriages.

- the times forbode much trouble, and affliction; and on that account I speak merely to your discretion, not to your consciences. The ties, the relations, the joys, the sorrows, the riches, the poverty, the whole fashion of this world, will soon be over.
29. 30. 31. But during this persecuted state of the church, a married life must occasion additional distraction; and will make it a much greater difficulty, both to the man, and the woman, to attend the affairs of religion.—If however this abstinence engage any of you in greater difficulties, and temptations, than it removes, my argument at once ceases.
32. 33. 34. Under these rules also let the parents, and guardians of young women act; who cannot so well, in these cases, act for themselves. If they, who are thus intrusted, see a proper reason for giving their daughters, or wards, in marriage, let them do it: there is certainly no sin in the case. If no such reason appear, they will do better at this time, not to incourage these connections.
35. 36. 37. 38. Lastly, with regard to second marriages, the rule still holds. There is certainly no sin in a second
39. 40.

29. Some think the passage, contained in the three or four following verses, was written in the spirit of prophecy. The persecution of Nero soon succeeded. I rather suppose the apostle's meaning comprehends the general *persecuted state* of the church, of which our Saviour had given his disciples sufficient warning.

39. The expression *only in the Lord* is explained by almost all commentators, as a prohibition to marry a heathen. I cannot say, it conveys more to me, than that in marriage, as in every thing else, we should act under a sense of religion.

marriage,

marriage, if the first be dissolved by death. But, as in the former case, and for the same reasons I give my advice against it.—It is true, I speak only my own private judgment in this case; but I think I may be considered as acting under a superior direction to that of a common adviser.

CHAP.
VIII.

I come now to your next question, *Whether it be lawful for a Christian to eat meats offered to an idol, in an idol temple?*—With regard to this matter, I doubt not but you are all ready to profess your religious knowledge; not perhaps enough considering, that charity is the soul of religion—that confidence proceeds from ignorance—and that true religion hath no foundation but the love of God, and his commandments.—I doubt not however, but you are all ready to profess, that you know an idol is nothing—that notwithstanding the diversity of gods, which are worshipped around you, you believe only in one God, who made the world; and in one redeemer, Jesus Christ.—At the same time,

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4 5 6.

7.

1. Partaking of the sacrifices of a heathen temple was a practice so convenient to the poor; and so agreeable from it's festivity, to the rich; that it was not easily relinquished. Many of the heathen converts conceived; that as they had no belief in idols, they might partake innocently of these sacrifices.—I add the expression, *in an idol-temple*, because that certainly was the apostle's meaning, as appears from the tenth verse. With regard to the mere meats themselves, he speaks afterwards. See ch. x. 25.

3. *Eγνωται* is here used: (as St. Paul often uses Greek words) in a Hebrew signification. It does not signify, *is known of him*: but, *is made to know him*.

M 4

I know

I know well, this established faith is not universal among you. There are some, who to this very day have their heathen prejudices so far about them, as to partake of meats offered to idols in a religious sense; thus mixing Christianity, and idolatry together.

8. It is very true, that eating *food of any kind*, is an
 9. indifferent matter in the sight of God. But it is
 10. by no means an indifferent matter to *mislead a weak brother*. Even suppose it were *allowable* for a *well informed* Christian to eat meat sacrificed in an idol-temple; is there no offence, think you, in encouraging by your practice the doubts of others, who have less knowledge than you have? Is there no offence in contradicting the whole scheme of your redemption by leading your brother into sin, from which Christ died to redeem him? While you thus mislead your brethren, you sin against Christ.—Let it then be your fixed resolution, that, as eating meat in an idol-temple may draw your brother into sin, you will never again allow yourself in that practice.

CHAP.
IX.

1. 2. 3.

What I have said above against eating meat in an idol-temple proceeds chiefly upon the inexpediency of

1. The apostle is thought by some to speak, in this chapter, to another question; and at the tenth chapter to resume the argument about idol-meats. I own I list with those interpreters, who consider this chapter as a part of the same argument; and indeed St. Paul at the 23d verse of the tenth chapter, seems to draw it to this conclusion: *Even as I please all men in all things not seeking mine own profit: but the profit of many that they may be saved.*

of it. I might strengthen what I have said by my own practice in similar matters. You acknowledge me, for instance, to be an apostle; and if I am not such to others, at least I am to you. I have a right therefore to my maintenance among you. I have a right also to the maintenance of my family, if I chose to have one, as well as Peter, and other apostles. And this I claim on the principles of *nature*—the precepts of the *law*—and the commands of the *gospel*.—But you see, I wave this right; nor would I, on any account, accept a gratuity from you. It is the only little matter of glorying I have, that I preach the gospel to you without expence. To preach the gospel to you, I am obliged: but that I give up my own advantages, and rights for your sake, is my boast.—For the same reason, that I wave this right, I wave a number of others, for the benefit

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saved. That the argument may appear with more force, I have drawn the heads of it together by abridging, rather than dilating it.

2. He was an apostle particularly to them, because he established the church of Corinth. They were, in fact, as he says, the *seal of his apostleship*.

5. Some commentators conceive the *αδελφην γυναικα* of the original to be some *attendant female*. In those days, tho there were *inns*, there was no *accommodation*; so that if travellers did not carry people about with them to dress their victuals, they must suffer inconveniences. But the sense I have given, seems the most probable, because of the particular mention of Peter, whom we know to have been a married man. See Matt. viii. 14, and Luke iv. 38.

10. *He that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope.* This passage seems corrupt. In the Alexandrian, and other copies, it is read, *ο αλων επ' ελπιδι τυ μετεχειν*: *he that thresheth, doth it in hope of partaking.*

of

20. 21. of those, to whom I preach. As far as I can with a safe conscience, I become a Jew to the Jews; and
 22. a Gentile to the Gentiles. I put on infirmities with
 23. the weak; and become all things to all men, that I may gain the more; submitting thus to many inconveniences for the sake of the gospel.—Consider again what self-denials even the candidates in your public games undergo. What ease, what comfort do they give up, for the sake of worldly glory?—Let us then so far follow their example; suffering many inconveniences, that we may procure happiness to others, and secure it to ourselves.

CHAP.
X.

1. 2.

3. 4.

Let me place this matter before you in another light; and urge you with the example of the ancient Israelites. They were governed by a divine dispensation—they were led by a pillar of fire—they passed through the red sea—they eat bread from heaven—and

25. This is much the same doctrine, which our Saviour inculcates in the parable of the unjust steward (Luke xvi. 8) *The children of this world are wiser, in their generation, than the children of light.*

2. The text says, *They were baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.* This is an expression obscurely figurative. I know not what sense to affix to it, but that we accept Christ as our lawgiver, through the miracles he wrought; as the Jews accepted Moses.

4. The text says, *They drank of that rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ*—that is, it was an emblem of Christ; which was carried along with them. The metonymy of a *rock* for the *water of the rock*, is easy. And the word *ἀκολουθεῖν* as easily admits the sense of *being carried with them*. Aelian exactly uses it in this sense, where he says, that Xerxes carried water with him, drawn from the river Choaspes, which was the only water the kings of Persia

and drank water, by a miracle from a rock. And yet, favoured as they were, they incurred God's displeasure; as you certainly will also, tho favoured like them, if you follow their bad example; and give yourselves up to improper indulgences. By frequenting idol-temples, however innocent you may think it, and eating things offered to idols, you may fall by degrees into those vile practices, which occasioned the destruction of the Israelites; and will also occasion yours.—Be not then too secure from being in covenant with God. Humbly endeavour to avoid temptations, instead of running into them by these idolatrous practices; and God's grace will help you to overcome the seductions of wicked men, and all other temptations, which unavoidably surround you.

Let me place this matter before you in a still stronger light; hoping that your own reason will see the force of what I say.—In the institution of the Holy Sacrament, what is held out, think you, among Christians by their partaking of the *same bread*, and

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16. 17.

Persia drank, (ὕδωρ ποτιόμενον ἑρξεν) Hist. l. XII. c. 40.—Others are of opinion, that the stream, which Moses struck from the rock, formed itself into a rivulet, and accompanied the Israelites in their passage through the desert. For the sake of this advantage, they would naturally keep in that track, or road, through which it led them. See Lightfoot's Heb. and Talm. Exer. v. II. p. 766.

11. On whom the ends of the world are come—that is, to whom God's last dispensation, the Christian religion, has been revealed. The Jews reckoned three ages—the first before Moses—the second after him—and the third after the Messiah.

the

- the *same cup*? Certainly that communion, which we all profess to hold, both among ourselves, and with
18. Christ?—Thus too in the Jewish church, all, who eat at the same altar, profess themselves to be
19. 20. of the same communion.—Just so likewise, they, who partake of sacrifices in an idol-temple, give an open declaration that they hold communion
21. with idolaters. And would you throw such an imputation as this, on yourselves, and on the holy religion you profess?—Provoke not God then with these practices; nor enter into contest with the
22. Almighty.—It is no excuse to say, that you pay no respect to the idol; nor eat the offerings made to
23. it through a religious motive. It is a great evil, if you injure religion by giving offence to others. Every man owes a debt to those around him: nor is it enough to consult his own good meanings: he should take care also, that those meanings be not misinterpreted by others.
- 24.
25. Thus I have given you my opinion at large, with regard to *eating meats offered to idols, in an idol-temple*; which I totally disapprove.—With regard however to the *meats themselves*, I am no way scrupulous. They are often sold in the markets; and I have no objection to your purchasing *them*, or *any* meats there,
26. without asking a question: for even idol-meats, when

25. As a great part of the sacrifices were given away, it was customary for the poorer people to carry their share to the market.

thus

thus reduced to common use, rank again among the other good creatures of God.—Or, if any of you eat with a heathen neighbour; refuse nothing, that is set before you, on any religious scruple. But if any scrupulous person inform you, that this, or that kind of meat hath been offered to an idol, by no means eat; lest you lead him by your example to do what is contrary to his conscience. In other respects, if you eat with thanksgiving, there is no objection. —Let it be your first great rule, to devote yourselves, and the commonest actions of your lives, to the glory of God: and let it come in as a second rule to give no offence to man. This hath ever been my study: and as far as I imitate Christ, do you imitate me.

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CHAP.
XI.

1.

I come now to your next question; *Whether women assisting in the prayers, and hymns of the church, should keep their veils on?*—But before I discuss

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27. It was common also among the richer, to carry their shares home for family uses.

28. The expression, *for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof* (taken from Pl. xxiv. 1.) is given as a reason both for eating, and for not eating. It is a reason for eating, where your conscience is not concerned, because all food, in reality belongeth not to the idol, but to the Lord, from whom we receive it. And indeed this is the reason, for which it is sanctified by thanksgiving, because then we acknowledge not the idol, but the Lord for the giver. Again, it is a reason for not eating; because, where your conscience is concerned, the creation produces food sufficient, without using any prohibited species.—Many however think the repetition of these words disturbs the sense so much, that they are glad to avail themselves of the Alexandrian copy, and other copies, in which they are not repeated.

this

this point let me tell you, it gives me great pleasure, to commend your observance of those *other rules of decency* in your public assemblies, which I have already given you.

- With regard then to your question, I would have that appearance of regularity, and subordination observed, which God hath appointed in every thing. A
 4. 5. 6. 7. man's appearing in a public assembly uncovered; and a woman's appearing veiled, are considered as
 8. 9. the usual signs of superiority, and subjection. As such therefore I injoin them; and would have that natural, and modest subordination take place, which was first pointed out, at the creation of man.—
 10. I may add also, that there will ever be people at hand

7. The veil was worn in token of subjection. See Gen. xxiv. 65. So late in the history of mankind, as in the time of the Romans, the veil was considered in the same light. Valerius Maximus (l. VI. c. 3.) speaks of the great harshness of Sulpicius in repudiating his wife, because she appeared in public without a veil. The word *nupta* properly signifies *one covered with a veil*.

10. *For this cause*, says the text, *ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels*. This is confessedly a very difficult expression; and many strange interpretations have been given of it. The expression, *power on her head*, is not very difficult. Almost all interpreters agree in supposing it to signify, *having her head veiled to denote her inferiority*.—The difficulty lies in the reason given for having her head veiled—*because of the angels*.—For one of the most *ingenious* explanations of this matter, we are indebted to Dr. Jeremy Taylor, who supposes (Liberty of proph. sect. III.) that *αγγελος* hath been the mistake of some transcriber for *αγγελας*; and then the sense is, that women ought to wear veils in churches, *because of the assemblies of men there present*.—But the interpretation, I have given, which is authorized by some of the most learned commentators, is, I think, the best. For this interpretation we give the following reasons.

hand among the enemies of religion as spies upon you, to observe, and mark any impropriety, or indecency in your behaviour.—What I say however on this subject must not be understood as countenancing any undue authority in the man; or any slavish subjection in the woman: for men and women were created for each other; and for their mutual comfort, and assistance.

11. 12.

But besides it's betokening a proper subordination, there is a *natural decency* in a woman's appearing veiled in a public assembly. Even the long hair, which nature hath given her, evidently shews the intention of nature: and you would all see an impropriety, if the sexes should change the usual distinction; if the man should wear his hair long; while the woman should wear her's short.—After

13. 14. 15.

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reasons.—In the first place, it is certain, that unbelievers did come in, as spies in Christian assemblies. See 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 24, 25. And particularly Galat. ii. 4.—In the second place, the word *αγγελος* which literally signifies a *messenger*, as well as an *angel*, is sometimes also used to denote a *spy*. Thus in James ii. 25, *υποδεξαμενη τις αγγελος* she received the *messengers*; which *messengers*, we know were *spies*; and were the *very same persons*, whom St. Paul (Heb. xi. 31) calls by their proper name, *κατασκοποι*, *spies*.—In the septuagint also, the word *αγγελος* is used in this sense.—It is happy however, that this very difficult text is of no great consequence to us. These injunctions of St. Paul with regard to women, must be considered as *local* only; alluding to customs then prevailing at Corinth. All the instruction, that we are to draw from them is, that every thing in our religious assemblies, should be conducted with regularity, order, and subordination.

15. Some commentators think the apostle's interdiction of dishevelled hair, and his injunction to wear veils, was to obviate all similitude between Christian women, and heathen priestesses.

all

all I have said, if any are still unconvinced, I have only to add, that the practice, I have here prescribed to you, is the practice of all the Christian churches I am acquainted with.

17. I come now to a point, in which there is great cause for finding fault—I mean the irregularity, that attends your assemblies at the celebration of the
18. Lord's supper.—In the first place, I hear there are great divisions among you, on this subject, and
19. party-distinctions; which I rather believe. Such indeed is the constitution of this world, that there always must be a difference of opinion among men; which will act as a kind of test of their wisdom, and
20. prudence.—But here is an evident fault, not merely in matters of opinion, but in practice. Indeed, my brethren, your general manner of assembling is very
21. far from the simple institution of our Lord. You make a *common contribution* of food in your love-feasts, it is true: but how is it disposed of? The richer form into parties; and taking their own provisions, eat and drink to excess: while the poorer, instead of finding comfort from the abundance of their richer neighbours, are left to starve. This is turning the
22. church of God into an eating-house; and the sacra-

21. I take it for granted, that the apostle alludes here to what were called love-feasts; as we read of no other occasion, on which they contributed to a common-meal; tho Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, he alludes to an ante-supper, which the Jewish converts used, in imitation of the passover. Heb. and Tal. Exer. p. 776.

ment

ment into a riotous meal; and calls for a very severe reprehension.

In opposition to this, consider the simple institution of the Lord's supper, as enjoined by our Lord himself; and as you have been taught by me. Sitting with his disciples at the paschal supper, that night, in which he was betrayed, the holy Jesus took bread, and blessing it, brake, and gave it among them, bidding them eat it, in remembrance of his body, that was broken for them. In the same manner he distributed the cup in remembrance of his blood, that was shed: and instituted this plain, easy rite to be a *visible record*, as it were, through all ages, of his meritorious death.

It is a great profanation therefore of this sacred rite, to celebrate it in the riotous assemblies, I have been just describing. Examine then the purposes for which it was instituted; and judge from thence of the temper, and behaviour, with which you ought to receive it. For you may be assured, that this unworthy

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26. *Ye shew forth the Lord's death.* This seems to allude to the *Haggadah*, or *shewing forth*, in the passover. Some youth was appointed to ask the reason of this rite? Then some grave person present was appointed to *shew it forth*.

28. An excellent rule, something like this, is given Ecclus. xviii. 23. *Before thou prayest, prepare thyself.*

29. *Not discerning the Lord's body.* Not considering the end of the institution: perhaps considering it under the old idea of the Jewish passover.

30. The apostle mentions the infliction of diseases, and death. These temporal punishments seem to have been inflicted, tho
vol. II. N uncommonly,

unworthy manner of receiving it, will, in some shape or other, provoke God's indignation against you.

31. Let those therefore who have not yet felt the hand of God, prevent it by looking into their own behaviour; and let those, who now lie under God's judgments, consider them as the providential means of their restoration to his favour. Let every circumstance of decency and order attend this solemn institution: but for the future, let no common meal accompany it.—Other things with regard to this point, I will give orders about, when I visit you.

CHAP.
XII.

I.

Your next question with regard to *spiritual endowments*, leads me into a longer inquiry. I shall endeavour

uncommonly, in the early church; but we must always consider them as inflicted by God. The apostles were only God's instruments.—Some indeed suppose the apostle is describing here only the common effects of intemperance.

31. I explain *διακρίνω* by the expression, *looking into their own behaviour*. *Διακρίνω* does not signify to judge; but to examine.

32. *Chastened*, is a good translation of *παιδεύομεθα*, which signifies properly, *to be corrected, as children*.

34. This verse appears to be the prohibition not only of the irregularity of love-feasts, but of *love-feasts themselves*. They certainly began early to be very disorderly assemblies; and were therefore early abolished. Traces of them may be found later in the church: but this does not disprove the apostle's prohibition of them at Corinth, where they had arisen to so great a height of disorder.

1. These were the several powers, which it pleased God to commit to the early Christians for the propagation of the gospel. In the practice of a good life, we are every where assured that the Holy Spirit of God will assist our pious endeavours. But the apostle here speaks of the special gifts, which were intrusted to the

deavour to answer it fully.—In the first place, 2:
 that you may not be exalted with these spiri-
 tual endowments, remember how lately you were
 all sunk in the impurities of idolatry.—Let me 3:
 next remind you, that as these endowments were
 given by the Spirit of God, merely to support that
 gospel, which through it was revealed, they all issue
 from the same source; and are so far on an equality.
 There ought therefore to be no contest among you
 about pre-eminence. Be assured that whatever gifts, 4. 5. 6. 7:
 or endowments of any kind you are possessed of, not-
 withstanding their variety,—supernatural knowledge, 8.
 —eminent degrees of faith—a power of work- 9. 10.
 ing miracles—the gift of prophecy—the ability of 11.
 detecting falshood—speaking in different languages—
 all proceed from the same Spirit, who distributes
 them severally to each as He pleases. The church 12.
 of Christ therefore, like the human body, is made
 up of various members. Be they Jews, or Gentiles, 13.
 bound, or free, yet after they are baptized into the
 Christian profession, they become all united by the
 same Spirit; as the natural body is by the same
 soul. So that when Christians, possessing various 14. 15. 16.
 gifts, have any animosity in point of pre-eminence,

the first Christians; and which ceased after the first age. The
 exact knowledge therefore of this question, is of less concern to
 us.

3. For the interpretation of this verse, I am chiefly indebted to
 Mr. Locke.

it is, as if the hand, or the foot, or any other member, should take offence at the rest. All are necessary—all contribute to the general good of the whole—without any one of them, the body would be imperfect: while their union makes it compleat. No one part can say of any other, that it is unnecessary. Even the weakest, and least distinguished parts, as well as the nobler, have their use. So that the body, and it's members being all at union, no part can suffer without injury to the rest; nor can any part enjoy ease, unless the rest partake of it.

Under this comparison I would have you consider the church of Christ, consisting of apostles, prophets, teachers, and all it's other members, composing one uniform, and connected whole. Without this subordination no society can exist: and tho all cannot attain the highest endowments; yet let all endeavour to deserve them. By emulating each other, as you do, you certainly shew you have not yet attained, what is beyond them all, a right idea of Christian benevolence. Tho a person were possessed of every spiritual attainment—tho he could speak the language of angels—tho he were endowed with the gift of prophecy—tho he understood the whole mystery of the redemption of man—and was actuated by a faith that could work the greatest miracles,—tho his *actions* were as splendid

CHAP.
XIII.

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27. Σωμα Χριστοῦ, καὶ μέλη ἐκ μερῶς: Ye are, in one sense, the body and members of Christ.

as his *endowments*—tho he gave his whole possessions to the poor; and submitted his body even to martyrdom itself—yet still, if these endowments, and these actions, can be supposed to exist without this spirit of benevolence, they would be of no avail.—

He, whose heart is warmed by this principle, is gentle, and kind to all. He is free from envy,

pride, and vanity. No improper behaviour is seen in him. He never seeks his own private advantage,

when it interferes with the good of others. He is patient of injury; and the last to put an unfavourable construction on the meanings of others. Nothing

that hurts another, gives pleasure to him. Nothing,

but what, in some respect serves the interests of religion, gives him real joy. His life is a constant

course of opposition to his bad inclinations. He

bears with the humours of those about him, seeking to hide, rather than expose them. He allows not

himself to believe the slanders, which he hears—

and preserves his good opinion of others, while

he possibly can.—Consider also, that as this spirit

of charity *excels* all apostolic gifts, it *outlasts* them

also. Prophecies shall be fulfilled—languages shall

become unnecessary—and spiritual knowledge (here

so imperfect) shall vanish in it's future completion:

but charity shall continue with us to all eternity.

In the present life, as we advance in years, and

become more informed, our views are continually

changing. In the same way, when we compare this

world with the next, we may be said here to see

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only through faith, and hope. But hereafter, when we shall be removed to perfect vision, the objects of faith and hope being obtained, we shall still find this spirit of benevolence, converted into heavenly love, the great source of all our future enjoyments.

CHAP.
XIV.

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As far then, as you act under the influence of this great principle, you may desire spiritual gifts: but I should wish you chiefly to expound, and instruct, For he, who speaketh in an unknown tongue, may speak indeed to God; but speaks to no purpose to his hearers: while he who plainly expounds scripture; edifies, exhorts, and comforts all, who hear him; and spreads knowledge abroad in the church. For myself, I rejoice in every gift, you possess; particularly in the power given you of speaking languages. At the same time, I must say, that unless he, who speaks in an unknown language, interpret also; the expounder is certainly the more useful speaker. If I neither make the revelation, nor the doctrine intelligible; what end does my speaking answer? If the trumpet give no distinction of sound, how shall the soldier be directed? Just so, if your discourse is no address to the understanding, what is it's effect? God hath given the blessing

6. The apostle uses four words, *revelation*, *knowledge*, *prophecy*, and *doctrine*. We may not perhaps be able with sufficient accuracy to distinguish the precise meaning of each: it is enough however for our purpose at present, that the apostle's general meaning is, that in whatever way we endeavour to instruct, it is to no purpose, unless we make our meaning intelligible.

of

of languages to mankind to communicate their sentiments: without this use, language is nothing. Let me then repeat what I said, that as you are zealous of your spiritual gifts, I would have you make them answer the great purpose, for which they were intended—the edification of the church. Let none of you therefore speak in an unknown tongue; unless what he says, is interpreted either by himself, or others.

The same rule holds equally in public prayer, as in preaching. If I pray in an unknown tongue, my own devotion may be pure; but I cannot lead the devotion of others. All prayers therefore, and spiritual hymns, should not only be devout; but addressed to the understanding also. Otherwise, tho your prayers in themselves may be excellent, it is impossible the congregation can unite in them.—For myself, tho the gift of tongues is imparted to me in full measure, my chief employment hath been expounding.—Be not then carried away, like children, by novelties: but like men use your understanding; and consider the end, for which the gift of tongues was imparted. You remember the early prediction of this great gift, *With other tongues, and other lips, will I speak unto this people; and yet they will not hear.* To speak in an unknown tongue therefore, you see, may be a miracle, to convert un-

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21. Isa. xxviii. 11, 12.

23. *believers*: but to those, who *believe*, expounding is the proper application. Unknown languages used incautiously, will discredit religion, instead of aiding it. What, think you, would an unbeliever suppose, who should enter your assemblies, and find a person talking to the congregation in a language, which none of them understood? It would make him
24. suppose, you were rather mad, than inspired. But if he should hear any of your teachers *expounding*; a
25. different effect might then be expected. He might see his error; his conscience might take alarm; and falling down on his knees, he might worship God
26. among you.—In conclusion, my brethren, when you come together, and every man hath his peculiar gift, let each be exercised with decency, and order; and with a view merely to the instruction of your congregation.
27. The following rules may direct you.—Let not above two, or three at most, speak before one assembly, in an unknown tongue; and that in order: and
28. let what is said, always be interpreted: without an

26. The texture of this verse seems to imply, that when they all came together, each with his particular gift, they were not so much concerned about edifying the church, as they were eager and contentious to display their several talents.

27. Why *any one* should be allowed to speak in an *unknown tongue* among believers of the same country, is difficult to conceive. It might perhaps be to examine his gifts; or as a proof perhaps to the congregation, that he possessed them. Or there might be persons of different countries present. Against any inconvenience however arising from the exercise of this gift the apostle sufficiently guards.

interpretation

interpretation let no unknown tongue be used.—

Let the teacher, and expounder observe the same rule. Two or three are as many as I would have speak at one meeting. Let others sit by; and only approve, or disapprove the passages expounded.—

Tho another should be more informed on a subject, than he who is speaking; yet let him not speak, till the first hath finished his discourse. Decency, and order require this rule. The inspiration of a Christian teacher, unlike the wild ungoverned fury of a heathen priest, is subject to restraint; as coming from that God, who is the author of peace, and order. I must add also, that this is the constant practice of all Christian churches.—I would not have women ask questions, and put their difficulties in public. It is unbecoming. Let them ask their husbands at home. Let these instructions be care-

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30. Our translation of this verse (which is literal,) *seems to imply* a contrary sense: but the context, I think, plainly shews this to be the true sense.

34. I am rather inclined to think, that in this instruction about women, no *public teaching* was *supposed*: but that it was meant to forbid women to ask questions, and raise difficulties, and scruples at church; which would tend to disturb the congregation. Inspired women, no doubt, had often taught in churches; and might teach. Anna the prophetess was an instance. Philip's four daughters (Acts xxi. 9) were other instances. And St. Paul himself (1 Cor. xi. 5) seems to allow it; notwithstanding all that is said to reconcile that text with this. I cannot therefore suppose, that St. Paul here absolutely forbids women to speak in the church. But their asking questions continually might have been a very disorderly thing; and have come to such a height, that the apostle might think fit to repress it. See a note on 1 Tim. ii. 11.

fully

37. fully observed; and let the Corinthian church remember, that it was not among the first converted; and ought not therefore to consider itself as a model to others. But let all your teachers conform to the advice I have given them, as the advice of an apostle of Christ. The obstinate must take their course.

39. You see my admonitions have two great points in view. The first is, that the gift of tongues may be used discretely; and the stress laid on *expounding*; which tends more to edify the church.—The second, that all your public services may be performed with decency, and order†.

CHAP.
XV.

1. 2. 3. 4. I come now to that great article of your faith; and ground-work of your hopes—the resurrection of the dead.—It hath been the constant subject of

† Chap. xiv. Tho the gift of tongues hath ceased amongst us, this chapter is an admirable piece of instruction to the clergy of any country—especially to the young clergy; who are often not attentive enough to accommodate themselves to their hearers. What matters it, tho they speak neither in Greek nor in Latin, if they treat subjects, or use words, and phrases, which the people do not understand—And if they do this to shew their parts, and learning; they fall *directly* into the fault which the apostle here reproves—that of ostentatiously displaying their gifts. If they would wish to preach for the sake of edifying, they cannot possibly use words of too easy a signification: for they who have been most conversant with low people, know best the short extent of their ideas.

4. It appears, that many of the Corinthian converts disbelieved the resurrection of the dead, (see ver. 12) and others probably held very doubtful opinions about it from hearing it constantly ridiculed by the heathen philosophers, some of whom used to call it *the hope of worms*.

my preaching to you, that Jesus Christ, according to the whole tenor of prophecy, died for our sins; was buried; and rose again.—I have repeated to you also, the evidence, on which this last great fact is founded—that he was seen, after his resurrection, by Peter, James, and the other apostles at different times—and at one time, by above five hundred people together, most of whom are at this day living witnesses of this wonderful event.—To this abundant evidence, I might add my own testimony. Tho inferior to the rest of the apostles, because I was a persecutor of the church of God, and like one born out of due time, yet was I at length favoured with a sight of my Saviour; and by the grace of God, however unworthy, I am what I am. Nor was his grace bestowed on me in vain. Through it's blessed influence my labours in the gospel have been unceasing. I mean not however to lessen the labours of other apostles. We all unite in one work. We preach, and you believe, that one great doctrine, the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

But now if *Christ's resurrection* be thus confirmed, whence is it that any of you can doubt his *own*? Your resurrection is inseparably connected with *Christ's*. If Christ did not rise, *your faith* is vain; and likewise *our preaching*. Instead of apostles, we are false witnesses, testifying the resurrection of Christ, which is void of all truth; unless *his* resurrection insure *ours*. If Christ did *not* rise, our faith is groundless; we are yet in our sins; and all the hopes of those, who sleep

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18. sleep in Christ, are perished. Hard indeed would
 19. then be the Christian's lot; who gives up every
 thing here, and has nothing to expect hereafter.
 20. Be not however misled by these false opinions.
 Christ is certainly risen; and insures the resurrection
 21. 22. of all his followers. As surely as Adam brought
 death into the world; so surely hath Christ restored
 23. us to life: and in a natural order, rising first him-
 24. 25. 26. self, he enables us to follow him.—Then shall be
 accomplished the great end of the Messiah's kingdom,
 when all his enemies shall be subdued; the last of
 27. which is death. After this great subjection of every
 thing to Christ, except the Creator himself, hath
 28. taken place; then the Messiah, depositing his me-
 diatorial office, shall be united fully with God.

20. *And became the first-fruits of them, that sleep.* This a beautiful allusion to the first fruits under the law, which sanctified the harvest.

28. This is one of those passages, on which the Arian builds; and no doubt, it is a great difficulty. I think however it will bear, without any forced interpretation, the sense here given. I know not what more consistent sense can be put on that awfully obscure expression, *that God may be all in all.* Our Saviour is represented in scripture, as sitting at the right hand of God, and making intercession for us. Till the conclusion of this world therefore his *mediatorial office* continues. Time is nothing with him, with whom a thousand years are but as one day. When this great event, the conclusion of all things, shall take place, then God, and Christ become one. It is possible, that St. Paul may allude to this great event, when he says, (Heb. ii. 8.) *We see not yet all things put under him.*—But I give this solution, which is yet authorized by good commentators, with great diffidence and humility. It is a subject we must not pretend to comprehend.

But

But at present we have to do only with the resurrection of the dead. If we believe not this article, how absurd is it to embrace a religion, which enjoins us to be dead to every thing in this world. Equally so are the dangers, and death, of which we daily run the risk. Instead of this, it were better at once to adopt the epicurean maxim, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*—Take care however not to be misled by these corrupt notions; which can indeed only mislead those, (I hope there are none such among you) who have no knowledge of God.

But perhaps some of your philosophical teachers may urge the improbability of a resurrection, from their not being able to comprehend it.—Can they

29. It appears, that the apostle having given a short sketch of the completion of the Messiah's kingdom, to which the resurrection of the dead led him, returns again to that point.—Being *baptized for the dead* may signify, as some suppose, suffering martyrdom: as our Saviour, a little before his death, says, *I have a baptism to be baptized with*; and in other places to the same effect: but the sense I have given seems to be the most consistent. The argument is, what shall they do, who give up all the pleasures of this world, if there be no other?

32. *I protest by your rejoicing* is only a mode of asseveration: I protest by your joy in the mercies of Christ.

32. *Fought with beasts at Ephesus.* Some suppose this is literally spoken. But others, who consider that St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, was exempted from this punishment, suppose he meant the violent contest he had with furious, and wicked men.—The expression will be easy, if we change the tense, and translate the original, *if I had fought*, instead of, *if I have fought*.

36. Some object, that if the seed die, it never rises. But in fact, it does die: it is only the germen, or bud, that springs up; the body of the seed first feeds this bud; and then turns to corruption.

comprehend

- comprehend the growth of seed? Does it not die,
 37. before it rises? Does not a different body rise (be it
 38. of whatever grain) from what is sown? And is it not
 credible, that the same Almighty power which raises
 corn from the ground, may be able also to raise a human
 39. body in the same manner? Why should it seem at all
 improbable, that God should be able from one body
 to produce another? With what numerous bodies,
 from men to insects, is the world replenished? How
 great the difference among them? Yet whence were
 40. 41. all produced? Take the heavenly bodies also into
 the account—the sun—the moon—the stars: what a
 variety of splendor do they exhibit! And yet of
 42. 43. what were they composed?—Under this idea con-
 sider the resurrection of the dead. Is it more in-
 comprehensible, that a glorious immortal body should
 arise from a mass of corruption; than that all this
 vast variety of beautiful forms, and splendid bodies,
 should arise from nothing?
 44. But you are led into this prejudice by the weak-
 nesses, and imperfections of a natural body; not
 considering that it is just as easy for an almighty
 God to form a spiritual body, as to form a natural
 45. one: and that this spiritual body may be inherited
 in the same way, from Christ; as the natural body

42. The apostle seems to confine what he says here, to the re-
 surrection of the *pious* dead; which is all at present his discourse
 led him to. The wicked must look into other parts of scripture
 for the mode of their resurrection.

is from Adam. The natural body precedes the spiritual body. And as our first body partakes of all the qualities of it's earthly parentage; our second body, depositing all it's weakness, and infirmities, shall be arrayed in all the glorious qualities of it's heavenly one. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Corruption cannot inherit incorruption. But when that great change, of which we have no conception, shall take place—when the awful voice of God shall call the dead from the grave; when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality; then shall the words of the prophet be fulfilled, *Death is swallowed up in victory*. Then may all the holy disciples of Christ join in that triumphant song, founded also in prophecy, *Where, Death, is now thy sting? Where, Grave, is now thy victory?* —Under the law indeed, enforcing sinless obedience, death was a fearful event; for we have all sinned, and made ourselves obnoxious to it. But thanks be to God in Christ, we are now under a law, which enables us to perform what it enjoins; and to avoid what it threatens. We have now the full means of victory over death, and the grave.—Let us not then, my brethren, be wanting to ourselves. Let us be steady in our faith; and in the conscientious discharge of a holy life; affur-

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54. Isa. xxv. 8.

35. Hosea xiii. 14.

ing ourselves, that on these conditions, our hopes in the Lord shall never be in vain.

CHAP.
XVI.

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With regard to the last object of your inquiry, making *collections for the poor*, I shall just give you the same instruction, which I have given the churches of Galatia; and that is, that each of you should lay by a portion, at the beginning of every week, for this service, as God hath prospered him; that when I come, all may be in readiness. At that time, I will appoint whomsoever you shall approve, to carry your liberality to Jerusalem; and will myself attend them, if it be necessary.—I propose soon to visit Macedonia: but I mean not to take you in my way; as I should rather wish to defer my journey to Corinth, till I can stay a longer time. Probably I may winter with you; and shall then accept your assistance in the farther prosecution of my designs. Till after pentecost however I shall continue at Ephesus, where I have a wide field before me; tho I meet with much opposition.—If Timothy come to you, treat him with affection, and respect; and assist him in his journey to me. I shall expect him soon, with the brethren, who are with him.—I could have wished that Apollos had visited you at this time: but he seemed rather desirous to defer his journey, till a more convenient opportunity.

10. Probably because of his youth this caution was thought necessary; see 1 Tim. iv. 12.

And now, my brethren, I beseech you to exert
 yourselves; and maintain that courage, and con-
 stancy in your profession, which become Christians.
 Above all things, let there be no animosity, nor
 dissention among you in religious matters; but let
 that charity, which I have so fully described, govern
 all your counsels—your teaching—and general inter-
 course with each other.

I need not desire you to pay respect to Stephanus.
 He and his family were not only the first converts
 in Achaia, but have been very useful to me in their
 ministerial labours. Your sending him, and For-
 tunatus, and Achaicus, was particularly pleasing to
 me: for they have given me a full account of the
 state of your church; and have supplied what was
 omitted in your letter. They have given me that
 comfort, which they have often given you. Such
 men you will ever hold in high esteem.

I transmit to you the general salutation of the
 church; and likewise of private Christians. Be you
 as affectionate among each other, as this church is
 disposed to be affectionate to you.

I now with my own hand sign this epistle: and at
 the same time, my kind remembrance of you all—
 wishing you always to consider, that he who does
 not

22. The expression *Maran-atba* is Syriac; which language had
 entirely corrupted the Hebrew after the captivity. It signifies
The Lord cometh, namely to execute vengeance. After the Jews had
 lost the power of life and death, they used to execrate with this
 VOL. II. O curse

not live up to the religion he professes, deprives himself of all hope of happiness hereafter.

23. 24.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Rest assured of my constant affection.

curse, such crimes as were capital; as much as to say, *The we cannot punish them, the Lord will.* St. Paul therefore speaking of the apostacy of professed Christians, as of a crime not punishable by human laws, says, alluding to this practice, *The men cannot punish it, God will.*

**END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE
TO THE CORINTHIANS.**

SECOND EPISTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

CHAP.

I.

PAUL, (an apostle of the Lord Jesus) and Timothy; to the church of Corinth; and to all Christians of Achaia; grace, and peace from God, and Christ!

With thankfulness I look up to God, the Father of our blessed Lord—the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort; for that consolation in all my afflictions, which enables me to comfort those who are afflicted. For if our faith in Christ be the source of our worldly distresses, it is much more the source of our spiritual consolation. It is a happiness also to me to think, that my *afflictions* and *joys*, are yours also; and that they tend to impress you with holy sentiments on both these subjects. For I doubt not, but as you are partakers of the distresses, which often attend religion; you are also partakers of it's consolations.

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8. 9. 10. solations. The distresses, of which I particularly speak, are those I suffered in Asia, which were indeed such, that if I had trusted in any power less, than in that God, who raiseth the dead, I should have been overwhelmed by them. He can deliver in circumstances the most desperate. He hath often delivered me; and I fully trust, that I shall ever receive from him all proper deliverance. Your holy prayers also, I doubt not, united with mine in obtaining my deliverance; as your praises will unite with mine in expressing my thankfulness.

11. For myself, whatever my distresses have been from ill-disposed men, I have always had the testimony of my own conscience, that with honesty, and sincerity—through the grace of God, and not in worldly wisdom, I have preached the gospel of Christ. You, in particular, are my witnesses of this; as you have often acknowledged; and always, I doubt not, will acknowledge; considering my preaching as the means of your happiness; as I consider your conversion as my comfort. In this I shall always rejoice; and especially in the great day of the Lord Jesus.

12. 13. 14. 15. 16. In this kind disposition toward you, I had determined to visit you a second time, in my way from

8. An account of Paul's sufferings, to which he seems to allude, is contained in the xivth, xvth, and xixth chapters of Acts; some of which happened in Greece, and some in Asia. The apostle seems more particularly in the 9th verse to allude to his being left for dead, after he had been stoned. See Acts xiv. 19.

11. By *gift* here the apostle means *deliverance*.

15. See 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 7.

Macedonia;

Macedonia; and to receive your assistance in my journey to Judea. At that time I fully intended it: but they who are ready to put a bad interpretation on all my actions; I find, accuse me of levity; as if I did not intend, what I assured you I did intend. God is my witness, I did mean it: and neither in this, nor in any thing else, that I, or your other pastors in Christ, have said to you, have you been deceived. The promises of God are all founded in truth; and we, who act under Christ, act under the influence of the same Holy Spirit of truth.—The true cause, I call God to witness, of my not coming, at this time, to Corinth, was tenderness and forbearance to those who have offended. I would not have it be supposed, that I pretend to assert any dominion over your faith. Your faith is unalterably established. All I wish for, in this matter, is to contribute to your spiritual joy. And for this reason I chose to defer my journey, till all occasion of offence should be removed. My comfort is in your joy: if I throw you into distress, I make myself unhappy.—Instead of coming to you therefore in person, I write this letter; lest that happy meeting, which I expected,

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CHAP.
II.

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18. When a man plainly *affirmed*, or *denied*, or (in the Hebrew language,) had his *yea*, *yea*; and *nay*, *nay*; he was an honest man. But when he affirmed, and denied the same thing; or had his *yea*, and *nay* at the same time, he was the contrary.

20. The connection of these verses with the preceding is difficult.

2. What tenderness of sentiment the holy apostle expresses here to his flock!

should be turned into an unhappy one: for I know, that you are partakers of my joys, and griefs.

4. The severity of my last letter towards the inconstant person, cost me much affliction, and many tears. I was grieved for the distress I had occasioned: but I thought it necessary to give you this
5. instance of my love. In my grief, I doubt not, but you all had your share; tho I do not suppose,
6. you were all involved in the occasion of it.—I now think, that as the offender hath shewn penitence, his
7. 8. punishment should be remitted. Forgive him therefore; receive him again into your communion; and shew him, by not laying too severe a hand upon him, that you love *him*, tho you detest his *crime*.
9. The end of my writing is fully attained, when I have restored this offender; and seen a proof of your obedience. My forgiveness in Christ shall certainly follow
10. yours; for I know that despair is among the
11. devil's chief means of seduction.
12. 13. And now, my brethren, be fully assured of my earnest care, and concern for you. If you want a new proof of it, know, that when I went to Troas, with a view to preach the gospel; tho I met there a very ready acceptance; yet because I found not Titus, from whom I expected an account of my Corinthian converts, I could not rest; but went in

5. There is great difficulty in this verse: but I have endeavoured, as well as I could, to connect it with the context.

search of him into Macedonia. There I found him
—and there, I thank God, I heard that happy ac-
count of the prosperity of your church, which makes
me triumph in Christ.

But still great is the difficulty of our ministry. To
some we are the means of life: while we increase
the guilt of others, who continue incorrigible under
our reproof.—Yet a gracious God, I doubt not,
will accept our services, with whatever success they
may be attended: for we have this inward testimony,
that we do not corrupt the gospel; but preach it
with sincerity, as in the fight of God.—It is not
however, I trust, necessary for me to say any thing
in my own defence; or to procure, as may be re-
quired from others, letters of recommendation to
you, or from you. Your conversion is our letter of
recommendation, open to the perusal of all—dictated
by Christ, tho written by us—not with ink—nor
like the law, on tables of stone; but with the Spirit
of God on your hearts. Such confidence have we
in our ministry before God, and Christ! Not that
we form this confidence in any degree, on ourselves:
but trust intirely in God, who hath appointed us his
ministers of the gospel; from whence proceedeth
that

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15. 16.

17.
CHAP.
III.

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14. See chap. vii. 6.

15. 16. The sense of these two verses is not perfectly clear. I
have transposed them by explaining the sixteenth first: which I
think, renders them somewhat clearer.

6. *Who hath made us*, says the text, *able ministers of the New
Testament—not of the letter; but of the Spirit.* This expression hath
given

7. 8. that life, which the law could not give. If the dispensation, and ministry of the law were of a glorious nature, (which was sufficiently shewn by that lustre on the face of Moses, which dazzled the eyes of the people) how much more glorious may we suppose the dispensation of the gospel, which was intended to compleat it? If the law were glorious, which was defective, and could not save; how much more glorious is the gospel, which makes up all the deficiencies of the law? There can indeed be no comparison between a dispensation, which was always intended, in a due course of time, to expire; and one of continual duration. The ministers of the gospel therefore speak plainly, and freely it's great truths: while Moses, covering his face with a veil, signified by that type, that there remained still something behind unseen. And this veil is still upon the hearts of the greatest part of the Jewish nation; who yet see not the glory concealed behind. Nor can they see it, till they embrace the Christian faith; which will spiritualize their hearts; and at once set them free from all the ceremonies of the law, and the

given great latitude to certain interpreters of scripture; who from hence think themselves authorised in expounding what they please in an allegorical sense. Whereas, it is evident, the apostle does not speak of the *writings* of the New Testament, which did not then exist: but meant only to shew, that the New Testament, (or Christian dispensation) was superior to the law.

15. Mr. Locke supposes, St. Paul may possibly allude here to a custom, still among the Jews in their synagogues, of putting a veil over their faces, when the law is read.

dominion

dominion of sin. In this holy religion, unveiled, we see reflected as in a glass, the image of our Lord; and conforming ourselves to it through the influence of his Holy Spirit, are carried daily to new degrees of perfection.

Under this sense therefore of the holiness of the Christian religion, and it's ministry, I persevere through all opposition, in the discharge of my duty. Conscious to myself, that I use no deceit, nor worldly arts of any kind, I address the consciences of men in all the honesty of truth before God. It is impossible indeed, that any one should resist the force of this pure, and rational belief; unless his understanding were first led away by the wickedness of the world. We preach not ourselves, my brethren, but Christ Jesus, our Lord. *We* are merely the ministers of the gospel, receiving all our knowledge from that God, who with the same power, with which he commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath illuminated our hearts with the rays of the gospel, and the bright image of it's blessed Author.—Conscious therefore of our own imperfections; and, at the same time, of the power of God, under which we act; we are afflicted on every side; yet always comforted: we are perplexed; but never in despair: we are persecuted; but never forsaken: we faint; but always

18.

CHAP.
IV.

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4. It is surprizing that any interpreters should suppose, as some do, that God Almighty is meant by the *God of this world*; as equivalent phrases are so often applied in scripture to the devil.

revive.

10. revive. The sufferings, and death of our blessed
 11. Lord, stand threatening on one side; his glorious
 resurrection exhorting on the other. For as we die
 for his sake, we are confident also of living through
 him; and of being, through our death, the minis-
 12. tring cause of your life, as well as of our own. Un-
 der all these worldly distresses, a steady faith supports
 13. us. Like the holy psalmist we cry out, *tho we are*
in the midst of the valley of death; yet shall we walk
 14. *before God in the land of the living.* Under the in-
 fluence therefore of this faith, we preach the gospel;
 fully assured, that, that God, who raised up Christ
 from the dead, will raise us up also, and all good
 Christians with us.

15. My sufferings therefore in the cause of religion,
 respect two great ends—your good—and the glory
 16. of God. Hence arise our zeal, and perseverance.
 Tho the body shrink under the oppression, the mind
 17. is strengthened more and more; and not suffering
 itself to be depressed by the light afflictions of mor-
 18. tality, it rises above them. Unbounded by the visible

CHAP.

V.

1.

things of this world, it passes their limits into the
 regions of faith; where it contemplates the glories
 of eternity. Our earthly tabernacle, we know, will
 soon dissolve; but it is our great hope, and conso-

13. It seems plain, that the apostle alludes to the cxvi. Psalm. It is a song of deliverance, in which, as the apostle says, the holy psalmist expresses his joy, through the influence of his faith. *I believed, and therefore have I spoken.* (See verses 3, 9, 10.)

lation, that we shall have an everlasting one prepared for us hereafter. Our miseries here make us wish, in God's good time, to arrive at our heavenly abode; where we may lay down the burthen of life for the joys of immortality, of which God hath not only given us a promise, but a foretaste also, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.

In the full confidence then of this, we consider ourselves here, as at a distance from home. In this world our happiness depends on hope; not enjoyment. We keep continually before us the prospect of our heavenly home; where we shall be present with the Lord. In the mean time, we live preparing ourselves with our best endeavour, for his gracious acceptance; waiting for that awful time, when we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and receive our doom according to our deeds.—How deeply I have been influenced by these great truths; and how sincerely I have preached them from a sense of their importance—God knows: and I hope you, who have had many testimonies of my sincerity on this head, will be able to vindicate me to those, who may be too much governed by appearances.

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6. *Knowing that we are at home in the body*, is a very bad translation; indeed it is directly contrary to the apostle's meaning. *Εσθμεντες* signifies properly *sojourning*, not *being at home*.

9. *Φιλοτιμουμεθα* signifies something more than *we labour*—it is *the height of our ambition*.

Whether

13. Whether the doctrine, which we preach—the acceptance of the Gentiles—be that wild doctrine, which the Jews represent it to be, let God be judge: but if it be the truth, yours is certainly the gain. With what ideas of God's goodness can we suppose, that the mercies of the gospel are extended only *to a part of* mankind? If Christ died for all; we must suppose, that all equally want the benefit of his death—the benefit of his laws—and the benefit of his resurrection.—Henceforth therefore all difference among nations is done away. Our blessed Lord himself, tho once known under Jewish distinctions, is now no longer considered in that light.
14. and every man, of whatever nation, who receives the gospel faithfully, by a thorough change of heart, and life, belongs to Christ. The Jewish dispensation is intirely abolished; superseded by the Christian.
15. The goodness of God hath reconciled the whole world to himself, through Christ: and we are the appointed ministers of this reconciliation. This is all we pretend to; exhorting you, as the ambassadors of Christ, to accept the gracious terms of the gospel;
16. 17. 18. 19. 20.

13. Some interpreters suppose, that the apostle only alludes, in general, to the warmth and transport, with which he sometimes speaks. I think (from what follows the 13th verse to the end of the chapter, and to the third of the next,) the apostle had the Gentiles in his eye; and some able commentators, especially Dr. Pyle, are of the same opinion. It must be confessed however that the passage is very obscure; and the transition to the Gentiles rather harsh.

and

and through holy lives, to be reconciled to God, who hath accepted Christ's death as an offering for sin. As his ministers also, we intreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain; but to remember the words of the prophet, in which God promises a day of salvation to the Gentiles; which day of salvation, be assured, is now fully come.

For myself, it has been my constant endeavour so to live, as to throw no scandal on the ministry of the gospel. I have not lived a life of worldly enjoyment; but in a constant state of suffering, either from the enemies of religion; or in the course of my ministerial labours. I have endeavoured also to unite the practice of truth with the knowledge of it; and to give my preaching force, not only by miracles; but by a holy life.—In the mean time, uninfluenced by the favourable, or unfavourable opinions of men, I pass daily through that variety of contradictions, which are ever incident to the life of an apostle—living; and dying, at the same time—persecuted; yet exalted—sorrowful; yet rejoicing—poor myself; yet making others rich—deprived of every thing; and yet possessing all things.

To you, my spiritual children, I speak freely on these subjects. My heart is open. But I fear the *filial* affection is not equal to the *parental*. Let me earnestly intreat a full return of that love which I

21.
CHAP.
VI.
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21. *Απαρτίαν ερωμένης*, made him a sin-offering. See Park. Lex.

2. See Isa. xlix. 5, 6, 8.

14. 15. 16. shew.—As the greatest instance of it, let me beseech you to have no communication with the wicked practices of the heathen around you. Nothing can be of a nature more opposite to the holy religion you profess. Light is not more at variance with darkness; than the abominable rites, and wicked lives of a heathen; with the holy worship, and purity of a Christian. A Christian church is the temple of God. The prophetic promises of God's dwelling among his people, and being their God, belong now peculiarly to them. As the Jews were ordered to leave the heathen in ancient times; so are you now. *Separate yourselves, saith the Lord now, as he did formerly: touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you: I will be a father to you; and you shall be sons and daughters unto me;* saith the Lord.—Since then my brethren, you have these holy promises, let me exhort you to live suitably to them; avoiding every impurity of life; and improving in every Christian duty. Reject not these kind
- 17.
- 18.

CHAP.
VII.

1.

2.

14. There is something very expressive in the original word, *συναγωγή*: *Be not like two animals yoked together, and drawing in opposite directions.* Such are the lives of a pious Christian, and a wicked heathen.—The apostle however cannot mean here to exclude all communication between good and bad men. He plainly shews 1 Cor. v. 10, that this could not be avoided. His precept therefore goes no farther than to exclude his converts from joining in the idolatrous rites, or other wicked practices, of the heathen.

16. 17. 18. See Levit. xxvi. 12. Isa. lii. 11. Jer. xxxi. 1.

2. Some commentators consider the apostle here as alluding to the deceits of their false teachers. I think it more probable, that by

kind admonitions: but receive me among your truest friends—as one, who hath endeavoured, by all the means in his power, to promote your temporal, and eternal happiness.

And yet I say not this from any doubts, or dissatisfaction: for, as I have often told you, you are my greatest joy. I could live, and die with you. What I say, proceeds from my affection to you: for I glory in you; and in all my distresses feel a comfort from the thoughts of your progress in the gospel.—And yet the distress I felt on your account in Macedonia, before God graciously relieved me by the coming of Titus, was very great. The account he brought me of your penitence, and sincere regard for me, was indeed a comfort to me; and eased me of that distress, which I felt on having written my former letter. That letter, I find, gave you the degree of sorrow, which I wished. And I am now glad I wrote it, as it brought those, for whose particular use it was intended, to a sincere repentance. There are two kinds of sorrow, the *religious*, and the *worldly*. The latter produces no effect. But the sorrow, which you shewed, had every sign

by a negative he means only modestly to imply an affirmative. *I have wronged no man: that is, I have done all in my power to assist every man.*

5. How affectionate is the distress, which the apostle shews in this, and in some of the succeeding verses; alluding to the opposition he had met with, and the severity he had used, which he feared might be too great. Without were *fightings*—within were *fears*.

of

- of godly sorrow. It produced an earnest vindication of yourselves—great distress and indignation at what had passed—and a vehement desire, and zeal to avoid every offence for the future. On my part be assured, that what I wrote, was not through any partiality to one, or dislike to another; but merely from a concern for the good of the whole church. This is the great foundation of my joy. Nor was I a little happy to find, that you had occasioned the same joy in Titus. For as I had boasted of you to him, it could not but be a great pleasure to me to find, I had said nothing, but what he acknowledged to be the truth. His affection you have intirely gained by that respectful submission, with which you received the injunctions he brought. My confidence therefore in you is effectually secured.

CHAP.
VIII.

1. 2. 3.

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I must now make inquiry about collections for your poor brethren in Judea; and must remind you of the charitable disposition of the churches of Macedonia; which have shewn their liberality in the midst of all their afflictions, even beyond their abilities; and have requested us to accept their bounty; and to take upon us the distribution of it. Theirs was an instance of liberality even beyond my expectation: but it proceeded from those, who had first given themselves to the Lord: and were fully assured, that we should suffer them to do only what was agreeable to his will. I thought it proper therefore, that Titus should recommend this example to you, in order

order to promote your liberality; that as you have shewn yourselves endowed with other Christian graces, you may give an instance of this grace also.

You must not however consider my *exhortation*, as a *command*. It is meant only to encourage you not to be behind any other church in proving the sincerity of your love; and in following the example of your blessed Saviour; who, tho he were rich, yet for our sakes made himself poor.—I give you no command however on this head; yet it is my advice to you not to put off this good work any longer. As it was talked of a year ago; and as you shewed then an inclination towards it, you will now, I hope, compleat that intention, and make a collection according to every man's abilities. To make almsgiving an *act of religion*, it must proceed from a willing mind.—Yet I have no inclination to ease others, by laying a burthen on you: but to make that happy equality among you, which is so desirable among brethren. Your abundance, at present, supplies their need; and their abundance, in some future time, may supply yours. Such was the wise distribution of God, when he provided for the necessities of our forefathers: *He that gathered much, had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack.*

The same sentiments of this matter fill the heart of Titus; who wants not my exhortations to take

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15. Exod. xvi. 18.

VOL. II.

P

the

18. the earliest opportunity to visit you. With him
 also I send another disciple, whose eminent graces
 are not a little distinguished among all the churches;
 19. inasmuch as he was the person appointed to assist me
 20. in the administration of their bounty—an office,
 which, among so many censurers, I did not care to
 21. undertake by myself; as it is my constant endeavour
 to preserve a fair appearance, as much as possible
 22. even in the sight of man.—With these two disci-
 ples I shall send a third, who hath always shewn
 himself very active in the affairs of the gospel; and
 is particularly desirous to visit you, since the pleasing
 account I have given him of your situation.—If
 23. therefore any inquiries are made with regard to these
 three disciples, be assured, that Titus is my parti-
 cular assistant, and fellow-labourer; and that the
 other two were engaged in a trust of the same kind
 by the Macedonian churches; and are faithful mi-
 24. nisters of the gospel. You will shew them that
 kindness therefore, that is due to the churches they

18. This other disciple is supposed to be St. Luke. *But his praise in the gospel, is not supposed to arise from his writing, but preaching it. His gospel, it is thought, was not then written.*

19. *Declaration of your ready mind.* This seems rather difficult. We do not easily understand how *the bounty of the Macedonian churches* could be a declaration of the *ready mind of the Corinthians*. But in some good copies *ημῶν* is read instead of *υμῶν*, which sets all to rights.—The choice of the churches is here made by the *χειροτονία*, which signifies the *holding up of hands*; in opposition to the *χειροδισία*, or election by the *imposition of hands*.

22. Supposed to be Apollos.

represent;

represent; and agreeable to that favourable impression of you, which I have given them.

As to your raising a collection, I can have no doubt. I know your ready zeal, which I have boasted of to the churches of Macedonia, with a view to incite the charity of others. I am only afraid, that you may not be entirely ready when the time demands: and for this purpose I send these brethren to you, not to take your collections; but only to give you notice to have them prepared: lest if any of the Macedonian Christians come with me, and we should find you unprepared; I who have boasted so much of you; and you, of whom I have boasted, may both be ashamed together.

The particular sum, which is proper for each to give, must be left to every man's discretion. Only this I must say in general, that he who soweth plentifully, shall also reap plentifully. Let no man however give from any motive, but that of a charitable heart. Nothing else can please that gracious Master; who is able to add more and more to his liberal servants—who can increase their power of doing good here; and (as the psalmist speaks of the truly charitable man) *give their righteousness its eternal reward hereafter.*—May that God, who enableth you to do works of charity, reward you for them, among his faithful servants! And may he enrich you more, and more in those graces, which

CHAP.
IX.

1. 2.

3. 4. 5.

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9. See Pf. cxii. 9.

12. redound so much to his glory! For your charity
 13. does not spend itself in its first intention, that of
 administering to the wants of the necessitous; but
 becomes afterwards the source of praise, and thank-
 giving to God, in which all those pious Christians,
 who are assisted by it, unite; while they look up to
 the great Giver with gratitude, for your charity, as
 14. well as all the other instances of his goodness; and
 join in prayers for you, the blessed instruments of it.
 15. —Thanks be to God for extending the influence
 of one virtue through so wide a range†!

CHAP.
X.

1. 2.

- I must now change my subject. I am sorry to
 find there are still among you some, who represent
 me as a deceiver; and set at variance my behaviour,
 when absent, and present; making even my bodily
 infirmities the ground of their offence. Such per-
 sons I should rather wish to reclaim by gentleness,
 3. than treat with apostolic severity. Why should they
 dwell upon the weakness of my bodily powers? Of
 what consequence are they? It is not through the
 powers of nature that I exercise my office. It is not
 4. through them, but through the power of God,
 that the prejudices of mankind are conquered—that
 5. all the vain opinions, and reasonings of men are sub-
 dued—that a profane, and idolatrous world is brought
 to the knowledge of God—and that the stubborn

† In what a grand and noble light the apostle places alms-
 giving in these last four verses!

heart of man is opened by faith, and obedience, to the law of Christ. From the same high authority also I have the power to punish such offenders, as are not yet reduced to obedience; but, notwithstanding the submission of others, still persist in their opposition; judging by mere appearances; and forming opinions of me by such rules, as they would not submit to themselves. If I should exert towards such persons a little more of that authority, which God hath given me to keep in awe notorious offenders, I should not perhaps exceed my commission. It would then be found, not only that my letters have their weight, (which they allow) but that my presence also would be accompanied with authority. I shall not however imitate the vanity of those, who have no scale of comparison, but themselves: nor boast of my own gifts, which are merely distributed to me by God for your sake. I claim nothing myself, being enabled solely by God to preach the gospel among you. And not wishing to build on the labours of others, I have hope, that when your faith shall be fully established, I may enlarge my views, and carry the gospel into regions still more remote.— Thus will all boasting cease, where the glory of God

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9. 10. 11.

12. 13. 14.

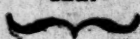
15. 16.

17.

16. *Not to boast of another man's line of things made ready to our hand.* This obscure expression, and others in this epistle, seem to refer to some particular person, who, through undue pretences, had interfered with St. Paul's church at Corinth.

18. is the great end. A man's own commendation of himself is of no value: let us endeavour to obtain the only commendation worth our pursuit—the approbation of God.

CHAP.
XI.



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Yet ascribe it not to folly, and vanity, if I should speak a little of my own labours. Greatly concerned I am for you all, that you may persevere in the gospel; and that you may never be prevented by designing men, from attending to it's plain, and simple truths.—I hope you never will, till a better Saviour, a better Spirit, and a holier gospel be preached unto you. For myself, I imagine my labours among you, are not inferior to those of any apostle. Inferior I may be to many in elocution, and address: but I take upon me to say, I am inferior to none, in preaching the gospel in sincerity and truth.

But perhaps it may seem an offence, and be considered as a debasement, that I have laboured for my own maintenance, while I preached the gospel among you—that I received from other churches, and not from you—and that even while I was with you, I received my maintenance from Macedonia.

This indeed is the truth: and I make it my boast. But if any of you conceive it shews a want of love to you, he is greatly mistaken. The real cause is, that I may take away all occasion of reproach from those among you, who pretend, tho not perhaps with truth, to this disinterestedness themselves. I fear there

there are some such designing men among you. Satan himself pretended to be an angel of light: it cannot be matter of wonder therefore, if his ministers should follow his example; and draw on themselves a like destruction.

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15.

Let me then in opposition to these teachers, boast a little of my own labours, however weak this boasting may appear. Whether they glory in their Jewish, or in their Christian advantages, I can place myself on an equality with them. Nor can you take amiss my boasting, inasmuch as, however wise you think yourselves, you suffer more from your new instructors. Your understandings are imposed on; your possessions are freely taken; your persons are insulted: while we, the apostles of Christ, are treated with every reproach. Let me then assume some boldness in this matter; and shew them, whether, on a comparison, I have not more to say, than they.—Can they claim more privileges from the law, than I claim?—Or, if they claim as ministers of the

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23. 24. 25.
26. 27.

13. 14. 15. Let it all along be remembered, that these censures were made by an *inspired apostle*. It does not belong to us to form such judgments.

24, &c. Many of these distresses, which the apostle enumerates, are mentioned in the acts of the apostles.—The *thirty-nine stripes*, he received from the Jews. They were inflicted commonly with a scourge of three thongs, and were the utmost that could be inflicted. See Deut. xxv. 3. *Beating with rods* was a punishment inflicted by heathen magistrates, particularly the Romans. See Acts xvi. 23.

25. *A day, and a night I have been in the deep*. Some explain this passage by supposing he had been in an open boat; others, on a plank.

- gospel (allow my boasting) can they shew such labours as I have endured—the stripes—the imprisonments—the dangers by sea, and land—the various terrors of death—the fatigues—the watchings—the want both of food and raiment? Besides all these bodily afflictions, I am daily oppressed with those cares, which arise from an attention to so many churches. This multiplies my distresses. Who in all these communities is weak, whose weakness I do not feel; and endeavour to assist? Who is perverted; and I am not on fire to recover him? If any boasting be allowable, it may be allowable at least to boast of sufferings. God knoweth the truth of what I affirm. My persecutions indeed began from the very first moment of my preaching the gospel; when the governor of Damascus, at the instigation of the Jews, endeavoured early to apprehend me; and I evaded his search by a stratagem. On that occasion, and ever since have I been graciously delivered by the goodness of God.
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- 29.
- 30.
31. 32.
- 33.

CHAP.
XII.

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2. 3. 4.

But on this subject I have said enough. To this I could add visions, and revelations. I could tell you of a person, who about fourteen years ago, was carried into heaven; but whether in the body, or in the spirit, God only knoweth. There he saw, and

33. See Acts ix. 25.

2. The apostle says, *I knew a man in Christ*: but this is only a modest way of expressing *himself*, whom he certainly meant.

heard,

heard, what human language cannot describe. Of
 such glorious revelations a man might boast: but
 for myself, I will boast only of my infirmities. And
 yet, if I should boast, I speak only the truth. But
 I forbear; as it may occasion among my opposers,
 a disagreeable comparison between such pretensions,
 and my present appearance. These bodily infirmi-
 ties have, no doubt, been given me by a gracious
 Providence to repress that undue exaltation, which
 might arise from such heavenly communications; and
 mine adversaries have found the means to turn them
 to my disadvantage. I have often earnestly besought
 the Lord to remove this evil from me. But God
 assists his servants in his own way: and tho' my
 petitions were not granted in the manner, in which
 I hoped, I was assured, that God's grace should be
 sufficient for me; and that the greater my weaknesses
 were, the more evident would be the gracious as-
 sistance, I should receive. I boast therefore of in-
 firmities, which shew that the power of Christ dwells

7. Dr. Whitby, and other good interpreters, are of opinion, that by *the thorn in the flesh*, St. Paul only means his bodily infirmities. Indeed Dr. Whitby's arguments are so strong, that I think they cannot be refuted.—In our translation the *thorn in the flesh*, and the *messenger of Satan* are made the same. It should be translated, *a thorn in the flesh; that the messenger of Satan, &c.* Some commentators suppose, and I think it is no unlikely conjecture, that this *thorn in the flesh* was particularly an impediment in his speech; the same which disqualified Moses from speaking to Pharoah. Exod. iv. 10.

in me; for whose sake, I can even take pleasure in those infirmities; and in that disgrace, opposition, and persecution, which arise from them: because, in fact, my weakness is the greatest indication of that heavenly Power, that assists me.

11. Thus you compel me to that boasting, which you ought to have prevented by defending my character against those who have maligned me: for tho in myself I am nothing; yet am I, through the grace
12. of God, on an equality with the first apostles. I have surely shewn among you, all the signs of an apostle by refusing no labour in preaching the gospel; and by confirming the truth of it by miracles.
13. In what instance are you inferior to other churches; except in my not receiving any maintenance among
14. you? This is the only injury I have done you. I am now preparing a third time to visit you; and I shall act then, as I have hitherto done, by putting you to no expence on my account. It is you, not your possessions, that I aim at. I am like those parents, who lay up for their children; but will not suffer their children to contribute any thing to them.
——What would I not suffer for the sake of your
15. happiness!——I only wish the return, which I receive, was equal to my love.

16. I know it hath been said, that I suffer others to draw money from you on my account, tho I impose nothing on you myself.——Let them name any per-
17. son, whom they suspect of such artful dealings. I
18. sent

sent Titus among you; and another disciple. Did either of those act deceitfully with you? Or can any one instance be shewn, in which those disciples followed not the example, which we have set them?

Think not that I want to apologize for myself. I speak before God, I have no end in what I say, but your edification. I fear that I shall find many among you such as I wish not; and that they shall find me, such as they wish not. This will certainly be the case, if those factions, and contentions continue still, which I have reason to believe did once exist: or if I still find among you that uncleanness, and impurity, which I have so often bewailed. In this my ensuing visit I shall certainly bring these sinful professors to a strict account; and hear what can be said for, and against them. And I now repeat, what I told you before, that if I find cause of offence, I will not spare; but will in person give those impure members of your church, that proof, which they inquire for, of my power in Christ. For as our blessed Lord in his human state suffered all the weaknesses of humanity, and was afterwards raised to glory; so we,

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21.
C H A P.
XIII.

1. 2.

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3. The apostle seems to threaten that severity, which was sometimes exercised towards notorious offenders. But it should be observed; first, that this severity was exercised by *apostles*, under the immediate direction of God; and therefore cannot become a rule to us—and secondly, that the apostle's *threatnings* seem generally to have been so well directed, as to render the *execution* of them needless.

his

his apostles, however weak we may appear as to bodily endowments, can through him exert the power of God.

5. Instead however of inquiring for a proof of Christ in *us*; I could wish these members of your church would inquire after a proof of Christ in *themselves*—whether they are of Christ's family—or whether they
6. 7. are among those, who are disapproved by God. For us, I trust, they will not find us of this latter class. But let them consider us in what light they please; my prayer to God is, that *they* may be approved.
8. If they are accepted of God, they need fear nothing from us: for it is not even in our power to censure those, who act in conformity to religion. It will
9. prove indeed the highest pleasure to me, to find my hands thus bound up, as it were, by your penitent and holy lives. It is for this reason, that I give you
10. notice of my intention to visit you; that when I come, I may lay all severity aside; and shew you, how much more God desires your repentance, than your punishment.
11. In conclusion, my brethren, be assured, that peace, and happiness, and holy joy from God, will be the never failing consequence of an increase in Christian perfection. Above all things, let unbounded bene-
12. volence be exercised among you; in which holy
13. bond the brethren here desire to be connected with you.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love
of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be
with you all. Amen.

14.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO
THE CORINTHIANS.

and the continuation of the Holy Spirit, as

THE CORINTHIANS

P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

AFTER St. Paul had left Galatia, where he had planted the gospel ; his new converts were seduced, as they had been in other places, by certain judaizing christians, who taught the observance of the Jewish law, *as necessary to salvation*. This was the first heresy, as we observed before, that obtained in the christian church. The apostle hearing of it at Corinth, (where it is supposed he then was,) writes the Galatians this epistle.

He first assures them, that the doctrines, he had preached, were the same which the apostles had taught at Jerusalem. This probably had been denied : for it appears, as if these judaizing christians had represented Paul himself as an upholder of circumcision. (See ch. v. 11.)—The apostle then, about the middle of the second chapter, begins his argument, by shewing the superiority of the gospel to the law ; which he continues (answering objections as he proceeds) to the end of the epistle. He himself, when he was *among the Jews* (according to his usual maxim of *becoming all things to all men, that he might by all means save some*) had observed many of the customs of the
h law ;

law; which he conceived to be matters of mere indifference. But here, when he writes to *the Gentiles*, who had been seduced to believe *these things necessary to salvation*, he alters his language; and, in pointed terms, shews them to be vain, and ineffectual.

Mr. Paley with great propriety, and acuteness observes the different manner, in which St. Paul treats the *same subject* in the two epistles to the Romans, and the Galatians. As he had himself founded the Galatian church, he rests the point chiefly on *authority*; of which Mr. P. produces instances from ch. i. 6, 11, 12—iv. 11, 12, 20—v. 2, 8.—But as the apostle had not founded the Roman church, he treats it with more respect; and grounds what he says, on *argument*. See Horæ Paul. p. 59.—The subscription from Rome, at the end of this epistle, is manifestly spurious.

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

PAUL, an apostle immediately by divine commission; and all the brethren, which are with me, salute the churches of Galatia. Grace and peace be with you from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; who died to deliver us from the effects of sin, through the goodness of God, to whom be glory for ever. Amen!

I am surprized to find you have already shewn so much unsteadiness in the profession of your religion; and that you have been so easily led aside by those, who pervert the gospel. Assure yourselves, there is no other gospel besides that, which we have preached unto you: and whoever takes upon him-

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3. 4.

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7. Ο ἄλλ' ἐστὶν ἄλλο, is rendered very improperly in our translation, *which is not another*. It should be, *which is owing to nothing else*.

self,

self, either to add to it, or diminish from it, shall most assuredly incur the wrath of God. Have I any
 10. interest of my own in this matter? Or am I ap-
 11. pointed by man to the office of an apostle? The
 12. gospel, which I have preached, is not the invention
 13. of man: it was revealed to me immediately from
 14. heaven. You know the character I once bore in the
 church of God; and the extraordinary zeal I had for
 15. 16. the religion of my forefathers. But when God, in
 his mercy, called me to preach the gospel to the
 17. heathen, I made no application to any man for far-
 ther instruction. I had not even a conference with
 the apostles at Jerusalem: but went into Arabia,
 18. and returned by Damascus. Three years afterwards
 19. I made a short stay with Peter at Jerusalem; where
 I saw none of the other apostles, except James, the
 20. Lord's brother. This, you may be assured, is the
 21. truth. I afterwards went into Syria, and Cilicia:
 but was personally unknown to the churches of Ju-
 22. 23. dea. They had heard only of my having formerly
 24. persecuted the gospel, and of my conversion after-

10. Do I persuade *you to obey* men or God?

12. Ananias seems to have been the most likely person to instruct Paul: but if we turn to the history (Acts ix.) there is not a syllable about Ananias's instructing him. He was also certain days with the disciples at Damascus: (Acts ix. 19) but we have no account of his being instructed by them.

19. *Brother* signifies here, only a near *kinsman*. He was son to the Virgin's sister, as is commonly supposed.

20. The apostle, in this account of his proceedings, means only to shew, that he had not received his doctrine from men. But he asserts in a very solemn manner the truth of what he said; because his conversion was a very wonderful event.

wards;

wards; for which they glorified God. Fourteen years after I went again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus with me; and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit I communicated apart to the principal apostles there, the doctrines, which I preach among the Gentiles; that I might avoid, both for the past, and future, every handle of offence. But none of them thought it proper, that Titus, who was of a Gentile extraction, should be circumcised. In our assemblies were some Jewish zealots, who came with no good intention. But notwithstanding my readiness to comply on all innocent occasions with the prejudices of others, I thought this a point, which demanded great firmness. Thus the judaizing opinions of those, who wished to add the ceremonies of the law to the gospel, found as little countenance at Jerusalem, as they had found before at Antioch. Nor indeed did the apostles at Jerusalem, in the conference we had together, add any thing to my doctrine. On the contrary, they were so fully convinced of the truth of my apostleship, that even James, Peter, and John received me as a fellow-labourer in Christ; and desired only, that, in my

2. The apostle says, *he communicated privately to them of reputation.* The reason of this reserve seems to be, that he feared giving offence, if he should publish *openly among the Jews*, the abolition of the Jewish ceremonies; and the reception of the Gentiles. The times, at Jerusalem at least, would not yet bear it.

10. The Jewish poor, found a considerable resource in the sacrifices of the temple, on which they greatly depended. But such

- my apostleship among the Gentiles, I should remember the poor in Judea, to which I readily consented.
11. —Sometime after when Peter came to Antioch,
 12. I freely opposed him. He had not scrupled to eat with the Gentiles; till some Jewish Christians coming to him from James, he was afraid of giving them offence; and temporised with them more, than appeared to me agreeable to the truth of the gospel:
 13. and in this he was countenanced by some others;
 14. and even by Barnabas himself. When I observed this, I publicly told Peter, that, as he had so far laid aside the Jewish law, as to converse freely with the Gentiles; it could not but appear strange, that he should give the least encouragement to the Gentiles to observe the ceremonies of the Jews.
15. In fact, my brethren, even we, who have by birth
 16. the privileges of Jews, acknowledge, that we are not justified by these privileges; but by the faith of Christ. And for the sake of this justification we believe in Christ; and relinquish the law. If we seek
 17. justification by the law, what do we make of Christ, by whom we pretend to be justified? Not surely
 18. the minister of salvation. If I have recourse to the law, I acknowledge myself still unjustified by Christ.
 19. 20. But by renouncing the law, I live through Christ,

such of them as became Christians, were probably deprived of this advantage, and were rendered more necessitous, than the poor in other places. We see St. Paul in several of his epistles stirs the Gentile Christians to make collections for the Jewish.

12. See Acts x. 28, and also xi. 3.

who

who gave himself for me. Otherwise, I should frustrate the grace of God; and substitute legal righteousness instead of the death of Christ.

21.

How is it then, that you, who have been so fully instructed in the cause, and design of Christ's death, should suffer yourselves to be so strangely misled? Did you receive the *miraculous gifts of the Spirit*, from the law, or from the gospel? And after such *heavenly favours*, do you expect to be perfected by *carnal ordinances*? Why have you suffered so much for the gospel, if the efficacy of the gospel be now relinquished? Were the miracles which have been wrought among you, and the Holy Spirit, which you have received, derived from the observances of the law, or from the power of the gospel?

CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

3.

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5.

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7. 8.

9.

10.

Even Abraham himself was justified by faith; and is therefore in fact, the father of *all true believers*: for God, who from the beginning, intended to justify the Gentiles by faith, assured him, *That all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him*. So that you see Abraham, and all who pursue his steps, are justified in the same manner. The law could not save. It required *strict obedience*: and as no man could pretend to this; no man, of course, could be

2. 2 Cor. xi. 4. 1 Cor. xii.

5. This appeal to miracles, at that early period, when so many could have contradicted the appeal, if it had not been just, is a strong argument for the certainty of miracles.

6. 8. 10. See Gen. xv. 6. Gen. xii. 3. Deut. xxvii. 26.

Q 2

justified

11. justified by the law. A prophet under the law itself
 12. tells you, that *the just shall live by faith*. By the
law therefore, it is plain, they could not live.—
 13. From that curse therefore, which the law could not
 14. avert, Christ hath redeemed us by suffering the ac-
 15. cursed death of the cross: and hence the Gentiles,
 16. receiving the blessing as Abraham's seed, have in-
 17. herited the promises through faith. Even a human
 18. covenant is of such force, that no man can disannul
 it, or make any addition to it. The covenant
 therefore, which God made with Abraham (and
 which by the very tenor of it was plainly restricted
 to *believers*) could not be altered by the *law*, which
 was given four hundred, and thirty years afterwards.
 If the blessing had come by the *law*; it could not
 be derived, as it manifestly is, from the *promise made*
to Abraham.
 19. 20. It may be asked then, What end the law answer-
 ed? Why was it given?—It was given to restrain
 wickedness, till the gospel should be revealed; and
 the promise should take effect. But from the very
 mode of it's delivery, it could not *be that promise*.

11. Habak. ii. 4.

14. Deut. xxi. 23.

20. *Now a mediator, &c.* There are two parties in every covenant. God, and all the nations of the earth, were the parties to the *covenant of promise*. Afterwards, in the *covenant of the law*, God, and the nation of the Jews were the parties. The covenant of the law therefore could not disannul the covenant of grace, because only one of the parties of that covenant was present, namely God. A mediator is between two parties, as the text says, but God is only one of those parties.

For Moses stood forth a mediator only between God, and the *Israelites*: whereas God's original promise was *universal*; it was that promise, in which *all the nations of the earth* were to be blessed.

Is the law then inconsistent with the promises of God?—By no means. The law did not pretend to justify. The whole world was under sin, waiting for the redemption of Christ: and the Jewish part of it were prepared by their law for that redemption. The law therefore in fact, was only a kind of school-master, to lead us to the knowledge of Christ. After the attainment of the end, the means are no longer necessary. All are now the children of God, through faith in Christ. Baptism is the bond of this union. Distinctions are abolished. All are become one in Christ; in whom you, as well as the Jews, are the seed of Abraham, and heirs of the promise. Even we, who are the natural descendants of that patriarch, consider ourselves, while we continue under the legal dispensation, in the light

21.

22.

23.

24, 25.

26.

27, 28.

29.

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2. 3.

24. What is in this verse, called *justification*, is in the 9th and 14th, called *a blessing*; in the 18th, an *inheritance*; in the 21st, *righteousness*; in the same verse *life*; and in the 22d, *a promise*. I only mean to infer from the loose application of these terms, how much better we come at the sense of the sacred writers, by comparing one part of scripture with another, than by taking a doctrine from a particular text, or word.

27. The noble metaphor of the original, *have put on Christ*, is too bold to be inserted in a tame exposition. On becoming Christians, the apostle tells his converts, *they have put on Christ*—they are clothed with him—God, when he looks at them, sees nothing, as it were, but Christ.

Q 3

only

4. 5. 6. 7. only of children under the discipline of tutors, and guardians. The gospel hath now pronounced us of age. 8. 9. 10. You also, who were before the servants of sin, are now adopted, together with us, into the same inheritance. In the days of your idolatry, you served the only Gods, you were acquainted with. But now, when you are the *adopted children* of the true God, whence is it, that you wish to put yourselves in *bondage* to the Jewish law? Let not my labours among you be in vain: but follow my example. 11. 12. As far as I am myself concerned, I have no ground of complaint against you. Amidst all my persecutions, and infirmities, you have ever treated me with the warmest affection. 13. 14. 15. Do you then consider me now as an enemy, because I speak freely to you? 16. Take care, lest your new teachers mean only to exalt *themselves* by infusing prejudices against *me*. 17. You have shewn your affection to me, when I have

4. *His son made of a woman*, exactly corresponds with the original promise of a Redeemer—in the *seed of the woman*; not of the man. This can be said of no person, but Christ. The *seed of the woman* is an expression unparalleled in scripture.

6. St. Paul perhaps alludes to a custom among the Jewish slaves, who were not allowed to use the titles of *abba*, and *imma* (father, and mother) to the master, and mistress of a family. These words had then a more enlarged meaning than with us.

12. The abbreviated passage, *ὅτι καὶ ὡς ὑμεῖς*, should rather be translated, *I was as ye are*.

13. What the particular infirmity was, of which the apostle speaks, we know not: but, it is probable, he means, what he elsewhere calls *a thorn in the flesh*: see 2. Cor. xii. 7.

17. *Huas* instead of *uvas*, as we find it in some copies, makes much better sense.

been

been with you : give me equal instances of it in my absence. — For you I feel the pains of a second birth ; that you may become the children of grace.

19.

— Heartily do I wish to be present with you ; that I might accommodate my discourse to your real circumstances ; for indeed I have my doubts about you.

20.

But let me ask you a question. Will not you, who profess so great a reverence for the law, be influenced by it ? There you read that Abraham had two sons—one by a bond-maid ; the other by a free woman ; and that the former was born in the ordinary course of nature, the latter, in consequence of God's extraordinary promise. This we interpret as an allegory. The bond-woman represents the law ; and the free-woman the gospel. We Christians therefore, as Isaac was, are accounted the children

21.

22.

23.

24. 25.

26. 27. 28.

29.

20. In the original, it means, that *I might change my voice*— (αλλάξαι φωνήν) that is, according to the matter, whether I commend, exhort, or threaten.

23. Gen. xviii.

24. St. Paul probably constructs this allegory on Isaiah liv. 1.

29. This is commonly interpreted of the ill usage, which Isaac received from Ishmael ; (Gen. xxi. 9) In what it consisted, we are not told. The short Mosaic account only says, that *Ishmael mocked*. But from the whole tenor of the history ; and from the apostle's application of it here, we are led to suppose, the case to have been this. — Ishmael seems to have been brought up by his mother Hagar, under the notion of being *the child of promise*. Hagar herself was so exalted with this idea, that she gave early offence to her mistress Sarah by her behaviour. And tho she appears to have been more decent afterwards ; yet we may well suppose, she never let the idea drop ; and that it was sufficiently instilled into

CHAP.
V.

30. of the promise; and as such we inherit the ill usage, which Isaac met with. But what saith the scripture?

Cast out the bond-woman, and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the

31. *free-woman.* So then, my brethren, we are not the children of the bond-woman, or the law; but are freed from it's obligation, by becoming the children of the free-woman, or the gospel.——Maintain there-

fore that liberty, which you have received from Christ; and submit not again to the yoke of bondage.

2. While you expect justification from circumcision,

3. 4. you can never receive it from Christ. The law demands perfect obedience. He therefore, who ex-

pects justification on this ground, gives up all claim to it from grace; which is the Christian's peculiar

5. 6. hope. With him circumcision, and uncircumcision are indifferent matters: the only anchor, on which

he rests, is that faith, which produces real love to God and man.

7. 8. You had once indeed just notions of religion. How is it, that you have now lost them? Not

9. 10. certainly through your first instructor.——But a little leaven will easily infect a large mass. I trust in

Ishmael.——When therefore Isaac was born, which was about thirteen, or fourteen years after the birth of Ishmael, we may conceive how great the disappointment was; and that both the mother, and the son would be naturally inclined to shew their dislike on all occasions to the real heir of the promise.

7. *Ye do run well; who did hinder you?* ΕΤΡΕΧΕΤΕ and ἀναγινώσκετε are Olympic expressions. Literally they signify, *You did run well; who crossed, or confounded your course?*

God

God however, that you will be restored to a right way of thinking; and that the sins of those, who disturb your faith, may rest on their own heads.

Consider the persecutions I have met with from the Jews. Are they not testimonies, think you, that I preach no Jewish doctrines?—I would to God, that every cause of seduction were removed from you; and that you would consider yourselves as called into a state of liberty. Only suffer not your loose affections to take advantage of that liberty; but let your mutual love be shewn in mutual good offices. For the whole moral law is fulfilled in this one precept; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. But if you are continually injuring each other, you provoke a return; and a circulation of ill-offices of course succeeds. The *spirit of the gospel* alone can secure you against these unruly affections: it acts in continual opposition to them; and if you live under it's blessed influence, you may be said, in one sense, to be above all law.

11.

12.

13.

14.

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16.

17:18.

13. The words, *I would they were even cut off*, allude probably to those ecclesiastical censures of excommunication, which the apostle elsewhere calls, *delivering over to Satan*.

17. The apostle, in this verse, describes that internal conflict, which every true Christian must feel; and without which he ought not to suppose himself a Christian. The imperfections of this mortal state can never be so intirely overcome, but that we must, if we are sincere, feel in ourselves this conflict. If we do not, we may fairly conclude, we are suffering ourselves to be carried down the stream without resistance.

But

19. 20. 21. But take care, again I beseech you, that the
 22. gentle spirit of the gospel lead you not into any im-
 purities.—Take care, that your lives be not
 marked with any of those detestable characters, which
 mark the lives of the heathen—and that nothing ei-
 ther sensual, or malevolent, may be seen among
 you. Pure charity, with all its attendant graces,
 23. 24. is agreeable to every law. We Christians should cru-
 25. cify, with our Saviour, all our sinful affections. If
 the Spirit give us life, it should of course guide our
 actions.

26. On the other hand, my brethren, I would not
 have you vain, and conceited; provoking each other
 by the affectation of superior piety: but if you
 observe any thing offensive, let the offender be
 rebuked with gentleness; considering, that you also
 yourselves are liable to temptation. Thus, like true
 Christians, kindly bear with each other. He, who
 thinks the most highly of himself, may have the

CHAP.
VI.

1.

2.

3.

83.

19. The apostle had given the same caution in the 13th verse; and not without great reason is the idea impressed: for we have often seen, both among ancient, and modern fanatics, a strange mixture of *spiritual*, and *carnal* love.

20. *Φαρμακεία* signifies *poisoning*, as well as *witchcraft*.

21. *Καμφοί* signifies those *disorderly revellings* so common among the Greeks.

22. Here all Christian graces are mentioned as *the fruits of the Spirit*. And no doubt every good disposition is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit of God. Our own endeavours must undoubtedly be used. But if we believe the word of God, we must believe that his Holy Spirit will carry us to much greater heights of virtue, than any endeavours of our own. At the same time, this reflection will teach us humility.

greatest

greatest reason to acknowledge, she hath been deceived. But let every man examine himself, that he may have a real cause for rejoicing; which a comparison with another cannot furnish: for every man must answer for himself.

Be properly observant of the wants of your teachers. God requires this mark of sincerity. As the husbandman hath the recompence of his harvest for his seed; so shall you from these temporal things, reap spiritual. During the short time we live in this world, we should employ ourselves in acts of kindness to all; but our fellow-Christians demand our particular attention.

You see how long a letter I have written to you with my own hand: yet before I conclude, let me add, that they who would seduce you to the obser-

10. Christians, at that time, were neglected by all people, but themselves: it was necessary therefore for them to be more attentive to each other's wants. It was for this reason they made so many collections for each other, of which we so frequently read.

11. Some critics translate this verse (as the words, they say, most properly import) *You see in what large letters I have written*: supposing that the apostle was not well skilled in the Greek character; and shewed his affection by writing in a language, which he wrote so uneasily. Theophylact, Whitby, and Dodderidge are all of this opinion. I own I prefer the other interpretation: and indeed it appears improbable, that a man of so liberal an education, as St. Paul, born too in a Grecian city, and conversant in the Greek poets, should be unskilled in writing the Greek character.

12. The early emperors allowed the Jews, throughout the empire, to exercise their religion; and circumcised Christians were considered as Jews: if uncircumcised, they were persecuted. This remark will throw great light on this text, and some others.

vances

vances of the Jewish law, do it solely to avoid persecution for the sake of the gospel: for they themselves, the circumcised, do not observe the law; but press circumcision on you, merely that they may glory in having made you proselytes. But God forbid, that I should glory in any thing, but in the cross of Christ; through which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. As I just observed to you, circumcision, and uncircumcision are indifferent matters. A thorough change of heart, and life is the only real badge of a Christian; and where this is found, there will also be found the true Israelite; and the peace of God will rest upon him.

Let no one then for the future, injuriously suspect me of judaizing. The persecutions I daily suffer, and have suffered, are sufficient testimonies of my fidelity to Christ.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, my brethren. Amen!

17. Some interpreters suppose, the apostle alludes here to scars, or marks from ill usage on his body. Others think, he rather figuratively alludes to those brands, or marks, which were often used in ascertaining the property of slaves. An allusion of the same kind occurs Rev. vii. 3.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE
GALATIANS.

P R E F A C E

TO

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE to the EPHESIANS.

THO the authenticity of this epistle hath never been disputed ; a question hath arisen about it's inscription ; some contending, that it should have been inscribed to the Laodiceans. It is a question indeed not yet settled among learned men ; but it is a happiness, that it is of no great importance.

The apostle's design, in this epistle, is, first, to shew the great end of the gospel—that it was intended to be preached to all mankind—and that he was appointed the preacher of it to the Gentiles.—From hence he proceeds to exhort his converts against the practices, in which they had formerly lived ; and which, as Christians, they had renounced ; fraud, and deceit of every kind ; and the pollutions of the world.—He next touches on relative duties ; and concludes with arraying his converts in the armour of a Christian.—The great scope therefore of the whole is, first, to inculcate the doctrines of the gospel—and secondly, the duties of it.

This is supposed to be the first epistle, which St. Paul wrote, after he had been brought to Rome, on his appeal to Cæsar.

CE

2000

EPISTLE

TO THE

EPHESIANS.

PAUL, an apostle by the will of God, to the church of Ephesus, grace, mercy, and peace! —Blessed be God, who hath called us to the hope of everlasting life, and adopted us, before the foundation of the world, to be his children in Jesus Christ†. With what gratitude should we consider this

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

6. 7. 8. 9.

† Some expressions in the 4th, 5th, and 11th verses, are among those, which chiefly give occasion to many unguarded things, which have been said on the doctrine of predestination. In those passages, I think, nothing is more evident, than that the apostle has not the least reference to the case of *particular* persons; but only *in general* to Jews and Gentiles; which latter God had determined, from the foundation of the world, in his own good time, to *elect*, or admit to all the blessings of the gospel. The apostle indeed (ver. 4) says *we*, tho he is speaking of the Gentiles. —Mr. Locke has a very long, and useful note on this passage, in which he shews plainly, that “St. Paul, who was the apostle of the Gentiles, did often, in an obliging manner, join himself with the Gentile converts, under the terms *us*, and *we*,

10. this great act of mercy; and for ever praise that gracious Being, who in his eternal goodness hath declared a method of forgiving the sin of man through the death of a Saviour—a dispensation not partially distributed; but taking place immediately on the fall; and comprehending the whole race of mankind.
11. 12. 13. The Jews were first called: afterwards the Gentiles;
14. who may be assured, from receiving the *same* gifts of the Spirit, that they have received also the *same* inheritance, and redemption.
15. 16. 17. It is the constant subject of my prayers, and thank-
18. 19. fulness, that you may continue in union with Christ; and that your minds may be enlightened more and more by contemplating the greatness of this dispensation; and the wonderful events, especially the resurrection, and exaltation of Christ, whereby God
20. 21.
22. 23.

we, as if he had been one of them.” See Mr. Locke’s note on this passage.

10. We do not perhaps understand the full force of the words, *which are in heaven, and which are in earth*. Some understand by them, *Jews and Gentiles*; others the *dead and living*; but the noblest idea, I think, is this—The angelic and human nature were once in harmony, and in subjection to the Son of God. Man afterwards becoming disobedient broke off from this great society, till in the fulness of time, God gathered together in one, *all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*. I have not however expressed this idea in the exposition, as it is not the interpretation most generally received.

13. Acts xiii. 17.
19. 20. Mr. Locke, and others observe, and I think, with great appearance of truth, that the apostle seems labouring in these verses, to express the greatness of his ideas: *τι το υπερβαλλον μεγαδος της δυναμεις αυτη εις ημας τε; πιστευοντας κατα την ινιργειαν του κρατους της ισχυος αυτη.*

hath

hath united unto himself, the whole race of mankind in one, vast, comprehensive scheme of salvation.

Remember then, that abyss of darkness, from which you have been delivered—that state of sin, and corruption, in which you once lived; and then consider the situation, to which you are now raised. Christ's resurrection is an earnest of yours—of that double resurrection, first from sin; and secondly to eternal life; which is through the goodness of God, your promised inheritance. Consider it therefore always as the gift of God's goodness. Claim nothing on your own merits; but all from the grace of God, in Christ; through faith in whom you are enabled to perform works acceptable to Him.—Remember also, that you are now equally admitted with the Jews to all the blessings of the gospel. Tho you were before ignorant even of the first principles of religion, you are now raised to a level with the peculiar people of God. All those rites, and ceremonies are abolished, which distinguished the Jew from the Gentile. Both are reconciled to God in

CHAP.

II.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
6. 7.

8. 9. 10.

11. 12. 13.

14.

15.

16. 17. 18.

21. These abstract names *principality, power, might, &c.* signify, in the eastern language, those who are invested with them.

2. The Jews had a notion that the air was inhabited by evil spirits; and Mr. Mede thinks, St. Paul favoured that opinion.

12. *Having no hope*: that is no influencing hope, for some hope the heathen had.

14. *The middle wall of partition*, alludes to the wall, which separated the court of the Gentiles from the interior of the Jewish temple.

18. The word *προσάγωμεν* alludes to the custom of introducing strangers into the presence of a prince.

Christ.

19. 20. 21. **Christ.** To both the gospel of peace is preached;
 22. and through the same Spirit, and the same mediator,
 both have equal access to the Father. You are there-
 fore no longer foreigners; but members of the church
 of Christ—that universal church, founded upon pro-
 phets, and apostles, in which Jesus Christ himself is
 the chief corner-stone; and in which God, by his
 Holy Spirit, now dwells; as he once inhabited the
 temple of the Jews.

CHAP.
 III.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
 6. 7. 8.

The adoption of the Gentiles is one of the great
 doctrines, which I am commissioned to preach; and
 for preaching which I am now a prisoner. From
 God this office was assigned me. From that great
 source of truth, I, unworthy as I am, was com-
 missioned to tell the Gentile world (what they had
 no conception of before) that they are heirs with the
 9. 10. 11. Jews, in all the promises of the gospel. I am com-
 12. missioned also to explain to them the nature of those
 holy promises, and of their access to the Father
 through faith; which great scheme of religion, tho
 intended from the beginning of the world, is now
 first revealed, to the wonder, and just astonishment
 of all the intelligent part of the creation of God.

20. Some suppose, that St. Paul in this, and in other passages,
 in which he alludes to architecture, accommodates himself to the
 taste of the Greeks, among whom architecture was in such
 esteem.

4. St. Paul often speaks of the calling of the Gentiles, as a
 mystery. See a note on Rom. xvi. 25.

Consider

Consider my sufferings therefore as the source of your advantages. I thank God they are. I repine not at them. I bow my knee to the Father of heaven, and earth, intreating him to perfect his work; and by his blessed influence to form in your hearts the true gospel-spirit of faith and love. I pray, God give you as full, and comprehensive a knowledge of Christianity, as we mortals can attain! and fill your minds with his wonderful mercies, and goodness through Christ; for which every thought of our hearts should be impressed with gratitude and praise!

Let me then beseech you, to make your lives answerable to your profession; and to live with that meekness, and unity among each other, which become Christians. You all form one body; are directed by the same Spirit; have one hope; and one Saviour; one faith; one baptism; and one God, the common Father of all.—It is true, in this great body, there are various distributions of God's grace; to which the holy psalmist alludes, when mentioning the Messiah's triumphant ascension,

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2. 3.

4. 5.

6.

7.

8.

18. *The breadth, and length, and depth, and height.* This text is often taken notice of, as very expressive. Bodies have only three dimensions, *breadth, length and depth*; but the apostle measures the last as it were back again, from the *depth* to the *height*; expressing the *depth* from which we are delivered; and the *height* to which we are again exalted.

8. Pf. lxxviii. 18.

VOL. II.

R

(which

9. 10. (which by the way, is a proof of the reality of
 11. Christ's death; for if he rose, and ascended; he must
 first have died, and been buried;) he speaks of his
 giving gifts to men—some he appointed prophets,
 12. 13. 14. others evangelists and teachers; all of whom are ne-
 cessary to establish the church—to oppose errors—
 15. 16. and to compleat the great scheme of Christianity.
 17. Let me exhort you therefore, as members of this
 great body, to lay aside all the sinful errors of your
 18. past lives. While you were involved in blindness,
 19. and ignorance, you were polluted with every kind
 20. 21. 22. of wickedness, and sensuality. Remember the pro-
 23. 24.

9. 10. There is great difficulty in the connection of these verses. I have given Mr. Locke's interpretation, which seems to me the best.—The unbelieving Jews, it is certain, would not hear of the death of the Messiah; and used to urge the absurdity of it to the Gentiles. St. Paul, in this very epistle, dwells upon the necessity of it (II. 13. 14. 15. 16) and here having produced a text of scripture for another purpose; he just, by the way, applies it to that argument.

13. 14. 15. 16. I have in these verses, agreeably to the method I follow, just given the scope, and connection of what appears to me the apostle's argument; but I cannot pass by, without remark, that beautiful, and pleasing comparison, which he makes between the growth of a Christian, and the natural growth of the human body, "*We are no more children, the sport of passions, and prey of designing men: but we grow up in Him, from whom the whole body is joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, making increase, according to the effectual working of every part; till we come, in the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man—unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*"

24. St. Paul often speaks of the redemption of man through Christ, as producing a new creation. *Κτίσθαι* is here used in that sense. Again, in 2 Cor. v. 17. *καὶ νῦν κτίσθαι* has the same meaning, Again in Gal. vi. 15. and in other places.

cessions

essions you have made as Christians, that you would throw off your old habits, and become new men. All grosser sins against your neighbour—falshood—25. 26. 27.
 theft—excessive anger—corrupt conversation—malice 28. 29. 30.
 —and bitterness of every kind, are I hope, among the first heathen practices you relinquish. Be gentle therefore, and merciful, and kind to each other; imitating that Saviour, who died to redeem you; and that God, who hath forgiven your sins. 31. 32.

Let all impurity likewise be avoided, as well as sins against your neighbour. The philosopher of this world may excuse impure practices under the name of natural inclinations. But assure yourselves they are utterly inconsistent with the kingdom of Christ. Suffer not yourselves again therefore to be involved in that darkness, from which you have been delivered. You have now a glorious light to direct you. But if it does not shew you, that all Gentile impurities are intirely opposite to the spirit of the gospel, you are yet in darkness. Nothing but a direct opposition to these can make you acceptable

CHAP.
V.1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
6. 7.

8.

9.

10.

2. By *πλεονεξία*, in this verse, inordinate desires seem to be meant. See Dr. Hammond on this place, and Parkhurst's Lexicon.—So in the 5th verse, the word *covetous* should be an *unclean person*. As lewdness and idolatry were so much practised together by the heathen, they are often brought together by the apostle.

12. The apostle is here probably alluding to the mysteries of the heathen; their *απορρητα*: and some have observed a sarcasm in what he says. He call them things *not to be spoken of*—but not because they were too *sacred*; but too *infamous*.

11. 12. 13. to God: Abhor therefore all such impurities, which
 14. it offends decency even to mention: and consider
 yourselves as called by the great prophetic voice,
 "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead,
 15. 16. 17. and Christ shall give thee light." Leave therefore
 the folly of this world to it's children; and accom-
 modate yourselves to the wisdom of the next. Too
 much of your time hath already been spent in sin:
 18. 19. 20. be the more earnest to improve what is left. Let
 the heathen have recourse to riot, and intemperance
 in their joys: let yours spring from a purer source—
 gratitude, and thankfulness to God; that true me-
 lody of the heart, which nothing earthly can raise.
21. Let forbearance, humility, and a general submis-
 sion of your inclinations, and humours to each other,
 reign among you.

14. It is probable the apostle alludes to several passages in the prophet Isaiah, which bear this sense; tho none of them exactly in these words. The passage most similar is chap. xxvi. 19. But the apostolic writers often quote from memory, and observe the sense, rather than the words.

16. Almost all interpreters consider this verse (*redeeming the time, because the days are evil*) as a lesson of worldly prudence. Persecution will arise against you, therefore act discretely. But I own I cannot see any connection between this sense, and the context.—Besides, it seems to be an unnecessary lesson. The converts, to whom this advice is directed, were so far from discovering too intemperate a zeal for religion; that the apostle found it necessary to caution them even against Jewish rites, and heathen abominations.

18. 19. Many interpreters suppose the apostle is here alluding to the Bacchanalian orgies; and that he prescribed psalms, and hymns, instead of the wild, and frantic songs, which were sung in those processions.

Let

Let the married state be observed with all sanctity; and be considered as an emblem of the sacred union between Christ, and his church—of that love and tenderness, which flows from one; and of that submission and respect, which are due from the other†.

22. 23. 24.
25. 26. 27.
28. 29. 30.
31. 32. 33.

Let the duties of children and parents be mutually observed. If the former are taught obedience; let the latter lay a foundation for it, in gentleness, and religious instruction.

CHAP.
VI.

1. 2. 3. 14.

Let the servant obey his master, not on any worldly principle; but under a sense of his duty to God, from whom he expects his recompence.— On the other hand, let not the master think himself free from obligation: but let him behave on all occasions with humanity to his servant; considering

5. 6. 7. 8.

9.

† The apostle dilates somewhat more on this allusion. Two things seem evidently to have struck his attention. He seems at first to have had nothing in view, but to exhort men to *love their wives*, as *Christ loved the church*: but being struck with this latter idea, which contains the greater truth of the two, he carries on the similitude farther, than he at first seems to have intended.

2. If this be the *first commandment with promise*, says the Popish casuist, then it is plain the second commandment of the decalogue, in which there is a promise likewise, should be abrogated.—May we not, with rather less violence, suppose the apostle means here, a *particular*, or *special* promise? The declaration in the second commandment, that *God will shew mercy to thousands that love him, and keep his commandments*, is not specific; but expressed in general terms. It relates to *all* the commands of God in general.

9. *Forbearing threatening*—that is, forbearing that domineering, haughty language, which is so contrary to the spirit of the gospel.

that he also has a Master in heaven, who is no respecter of persons.

10. To conclude, my brethren, exert strenuously those
endeavours, which will be farther aided by the di-
11. 12. vine grace. You have not only the opposition of
wicked men to combat; but must expect also the op-
13. position of wicked spirits. Put on therefore that
divine armour, which the gospel hath provided. It
14. will serve you in every exigence. Let truth, honesty,
15. and sincerity surround you like a military belt. Let
a good conscience be your breast-plate; and a peace-
able disposition, like greaves, defend your steps.
16. But let the shield of faith—a firm belief in the
truths of religion—be your great security against
17. every attack. Crown all with the helmet of salva-
tion—the hope of everlasting life: and for your of-
18. fensive arms, take the word of God, which is the
sword of the Spirit.—In using these divine arms,
add constant prayer to God for yourselves, and
19. 20. others. And forget not me your apostle in your
prayers; who am suffering imprisonment for your

16. *Quench all the fiery darts.* The apostle alludes to missile weapons, often used, with burning flax wrapped about them.

18. Bp. Wilkins in his treatise on prayer p. 39, explains the expression, *watching thereunto with all perseverance, &c.* as an instruction to take every opportunity of reading, meditation, company, &c. to gather up constantly proper materials for prayer; which is an *excellent lesson* to a Christian, whatever may become of the interpretation.

19. *That utterance may be given me;* see a note on 2 Cor. xii. 7, and Gal. iv. 13.

lake,

sake, that I may plead the cause of the gospel boldly as I ought.

With regard to all particulars relating to myself, 21. 22.
I refer you to Tychicus, a faithful minister of Christ, who brings you this epistle, and will answer all your questions.

Peace and love be among you all; and the grace 23. 24.
of God upon all his faithful servants!

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE
EPHESIANS.

CHAP. IV.

The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the

the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the

the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the

the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the

the tenth is the fact that the
the eleventh is the fact that the

the twelfth is the fact that the
the thirteenth is the fact that the

the fourteenth is the fact that the
the fifteenth is the fact that the

the sixteenth is the fact that the
the seventeenth is the fact that the

the eighteenth is the fact that the
the nineteenth is the fact that the

P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THIS epistle was written from Rome to the Christians of Philippi, a city of Macedonia; a short time, as is generally supposed, before St. Paul was set at liberty. It was sent by Epaphroditus, by whom the apostle had received a contribution from his friends at that place.—He begins, after a salutation full of tenderness, and kindness, to satisfy their questions about his present situation at Rome. He assures them of his perfect resignation—speaks of his deliverance, as a matter of great uncertainty; but rather believes, that it is God's good pleasure, it should take place. He then exhorts them to purity of life—cautions them against Jewish zealots—and kindly accepts the supply they had sent him.

P. R. I. T. A. C. E.

TO THE

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THIS epistle was written from Rome to the Christians of Thessalonica, a city of Macedonia; a short time after it was sent by Epaphroditus, by whom the apostle had received a commission from his friends in that place. He begins, after a short notice of his health, and kind wishes to his friends, with his present situation as Roman. He alludes then to his present resignation to the will of God, as a mark of his perfect submission; but rather than to let them know that he was in prison, he should take place. He then exhorts them to unity and peace, and to the same spirit of love and charity, which he himself had in him.

EPISTLE

TO THE

PHILIPPIANS.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

PAUL, and Timothy, ministers of Christ, to the bishops, deacons, and whole Christian church at Philippi; grace and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!

3. 4. 5. 6.

Your advancement in the gospel from your first conversion till this time, is the constant subject of my thankfulness to God; who will, I doubt not, preserve you steady in that faith, which you have embraced, till the great day of Christ. I have every reason to hope this of you, as, through the grace of God, you have been partakers with me in defending, and confirming the gospel; and have kindly administered to me in all those necessities, which I have suffered for it's sake. God knows the love I bear you; and the earnest prayers I make, that you may increase in all Christian love, and knowledge; and that

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10. 11.

that being fully convinced of the excellence of that holy faith, which you have embraced, you may abound more, and more, in the fruits it produces to the glory of God; and be found innocent, and sincere members of the church of Christ, in the day of his glorious appearance.

12. Let me now answer your inquiries, by assuring you, that whatever hath happened to me, hath had
 13. a tendency to advance the gospel. The occasion of
 14. my being sent here a prisoner is now well known even in the emperor's court; and hath excited the zeal of many to stand forth in the defence of the gospel.
 15. 16. 17. I wish I could speak as favourably of all. But while there are many sincere preachers of God's word, who consider me as a suffering minister in his cause; I must add, there are others, who preach in opposition to me; mixing Jewish ceremonies with the gospel; and are not withheld by knowing the distress they
 18. give me.—Some good effect may however arise from such preaching; and so far it will always be matter of joy to me.
 19. 20. As to my present sufferings, I have no doubt, but I shall always have reason to consider them through

15. The apostle does not express whom he meant by these opposers. But it is generally supposed he meant the Jewish converts. The words, *ex αἵματι*, in the sixteenth verse, seems to imply some *impure mixture*; and Judaism was the principal mixture, we know of, that prevailed at that time. In other parts of the epistle also the apostle seems to have allusion to the Jews. See particularly the beginning of chap. iii.

your

your prayers, and the direction of the Holy Spirit, as the means of my happiness. I hope also, that I shall persevere with such firmness, that the gospel of Christ shall be advanced either by my life, or death. If I live, I live in Christ: if I die, I die in hope of everlasting mercy; and of setting the seal of martyrdom to the truth of the gospel. Suffering, it is true, awaits me here: yet still my choice is divided. To be removed to Christ, is my secret wish: but it may be more advantageous to the churches I have planted, to continue longer upon earth. And indeed I have persuasion, that this is God's destination; and that I shall fulfil that joy, which you express in the hope of seeing me again.

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23. 24.

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29. 30.

CHAP.

II.

1. 2.

In the mean time, let your lives be such as become the gospel of Christ; that whether I see you, or hear of you only in my absence, I may find, you live in happy unity together; and have emulation in nothing, but in paying obedience to the precepts of the gospel.—Nor let any worldly fears, nor worldly adversaries discompose you. The opposition of your enemies marks their hard, and impenitent hearts; but brightens your hopes in the mercies of God; purifying your religious principles, as I hope in God it hath done mine, by adding suffering to faith.

If therefore you have any consolation in Christ—any comfort in love—any joy in the Holy Spirit;

21. If the original be pointed, with a comma after *Χριστος*, the sense will be *For Christ to me, both in life and death, is gain.*

and

- and in the mercies of God—compleat my hopes in you by continuing in the exercise of Christian charity.
3. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory;
4. but in humility of mind, let each esteem his neighbour better than himself; and in every thing consider his neighbour's interest, as his own. Let each
5. 6. 7. 8. 9. of you imitate the example of your blessed Saviour,
10. 11. who took upon himself the lowly form of man; and suffered death upon the cross; tho he was before equal with God; and was afterwards to be exalted to the highest state of glory. While you were under
12. my eye, your religious conduct was ever pleasing to me: let it be equally so in my absence. Conform your actions with caution, and godly fear, to the
13. precepts of the gospel; being assured that it is through

5. I give what appears to me to be the *primary, and argumentative* purport of these verses; which was to recommend *humility* and *charity* by the example of Christ. The difficulties they contain, I have not entered into; hardly any two commentators agreeing in the same precise meaning. The expression, *ὃς ἰσχυρὸς ἡνῶτα το εἶναι ὡς θεὸς*, *he thought it not robbery to be equal to God*, is generally explained, as if he did not covet or desire to appear on earth in the divine glory. See Whitby, and Pyle.—The expression, *God hath highly exalted him*, is supposed to refer to the exaltation of Christ's *human nature*—his *divine nature* being in the form of God!—But perhaps there is no great wisdom in examining too deeply into these high points, which must for ever be above us. *Nescire velle, quæ magister optimus nescire nos vult, erudita inscitia est.*—See this subject discussed in the three first sermons of vol. IV. of Sherlock's sermons.

13. It seems to be the constant doctrine of scripture, (expressed in this verse among other passages) that the Spirit of God, in a manner, makes a part of us, and is disposed to act uniformly upon all mankind, who use the means prescribed in scripture to obtain this

through your own fault only, if God's Holy Spirit ever fail to assist your endeavours. Be particularly careful to suffer no harshness, nor animosity of any kind to enter into your disputes—that your adversaries may throw as little imputation as possible upon you—and that you may at least be considered as blameless, and irreproachable among those, who will always be ready to take hold of every thing in their power; in the midst of whom I wish you to shine as lights in the world: so that having passed your Christian pilgrimage on earth, I may rejoice in the day of Christ, at the success of my ministry among you. Nay if I should even now be offered up as a sacrifice for my labours in the gospel, I, as well as you, ought to make it matter of joy.

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17. 18.

this powerful aid; among which fervent prayer is the chief.—How far God may favour his faithful servants in their *exigences* with *particular aids*, we know not. In *general*, however it seems to be the language, rather of enthusiasm, than of reason, and scripture, that the Holy Spirit of God assists us by partial, desultory illapses. But as we are told, that *without God we can do no good thing*, it seems probable that the Spirit of God is never entirely quenched in the breasts even of the worst of men. If it were, they could never repent.—We are told in the text, to *work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us*. The reason is plain, lest by *not working for ourselves*, we should lose the assistance of God, which will decay, more, and more, as we neglect the gracious admonitions of the Holy Spirit.—As to the phrase, that *God worketh in us to will, and to do of his good pleasure*, it appears, from the whole sense of the passage, that he does not act in an arbitrary manner, (for then it would be absurd for us to work ourselves) but only, that it is his good pleasure, that he works for us at all.

15. *Shine as lights*. The word *own*, retained light, I believe, is commonly used to express that kind of light, which is intended to direct mariners.

I trust

19. I trust in Christ, that I shall soon be able to send
 20. Timothy to Philippi, through whom I shall obtain
 21. some certain intelligence of you. I have no one here,
 22. on whom I can equally depend. I see among all too
 23. 24. much attachment to themselves; and too little to the
 gospel. But he with the affection of a child, hath
 been dutifully attentive to me, as you have often had
 opportunity to observe. I shall wait however to see
 what will be the event of my trial here; and if I can-
 not come myself, I shall send him.
25. In the mean time, I thought it proper to send
 back to you, your messenger, Epaphroditus with
 this letter, who has delivered your supplies safely to
 me; and whom I consider as my fellow-labourer,
 26. and a minister to me from you. He has been greatly
 distressed at finding you had heard of his sickness.
27. He hath indeed been so ill, that his life was despaired
 of: but it hath pleased God to restore him, which
 I consider as an act of mercy to me, as well as to
 28. him. I send him therefore the more speedily, that
 you may not wait long in suspense; and that I may
 29. also rejoice the sooner in your joy at seeing him. I
 need not exhort you to receive him joyfully; and
 30. to treat him, and all such pastors, with respect. He

27. From circumstances of this kind, we see the apostles had not always inherent in them the power of healing the sick: otherwise it might be supposed, that Paul would have healed this useful minister of the church.

28. *Σπεδαιότερον*, is rendered better by *basily*, or *speedily*, than *carefully*.

hath

hath hazarded his life for Christ's sake, in the execution of your kind commission to assist me.

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.—And yet before I conclude, let me exhort you again, as it may make a stronger impression, not to suffer yourselves to be misled by those Jewish zealots, who would inforce circumcision, as necessary to salvation: but to consider the church of Christ, as the true church of God; which, instead of placing any confidence in outward ceremonies, trusts in Jesus Christ alone, and worships God in truth. No man surely can have more reason to trust in Jewish privileges than I have. I was born, initiated, and educated in the Jewish church with every circumstance of exactness. I afterwards embraced one of it's strictest sects; and opposing all it's adversaries, was a most rigid observer of it's whole ritual. But these things, on which I once so greatly valued myself, I now totally reject, for the sake of the gospel. Every thing I consider as trifling in the comparison. All I had in the world I gave up for Christ; giving up also every idea of acceptance through the Mosaic law; trusting solely in the promises of the gospel—acknowledging the amazing truth of Christ's re-

CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

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1. It seems as if the apostle had intended to conclude his epistle here. His saying, he proposed to send away Epaphroditus *συνδαιοντερος*, seems to imply it. But the idea of the Jewish zealots intervening, carries him farther into length.

8. *Suffered the loss of all things.* The original word respects chiefly that kind of loss, which mariners suffer, when they throw their goods into the sea, to save their lives.

11. surrection—and following his blessed steps, that I might through him, rise again to a glorious immortality. The prize is set before me. I have not yet attained it. I am not yet perfected. But I keep my eye fixed on the great end. I forget every thing behind; and looking steadily at the point before me, I press towards the mark—that glorious mark of eternal life, which the gospel presents.

12. 13. 14. Let me exhort you all therefore to adhere firmly to this truth—that salvation depends only on the gospel. But if any have not yet gotten intirely over his Jewish scruples, let him not be discouraged:

15. God will, by degrees, remove them. Let those, in the mean time, whose faith is purer, continue steadily in it; following the example, which we, and their other pastors, have set them. Thus while

16. they, who are enemies of the cross of Christ (whom I have often with great distress mentioned to you)

17. spend their lives in worldly gratifications, to which they are totally given up; let us have our conver-

18. sation in heaven; expecting that great day, when

19. these vile bodies shall take a glorious form; and

20. through the power of God be totally rendered sub-

21. servient to him.—Let this great consideration

CHAP.
IV.

1. weigh with you to continue firm in the faith you

2. have professed. To Euodias, and Syntyche in par-

2. These two women might probably live in Jewish families; or their relations might be judaizing Christians; or they might be connected with heathen families.

icular I direct this exhortation. I beseech also my worthy colleague, together with Clement, and others my faithful fellow-labourers in the gospel, to assist these women, who have shewn such piety in their services to us.

I now again conclude, exhorting you to rejoice in the Lord, under all your distresses. Let your moderation be evident to all. Every controversy will soon be carried from an earthly to a heavenly tribunal. Be not therefore anxious about worldly affairs; but lay all your requests before God, never omitting thanksgiving for past mercies. And may the peace of God, which can be felt only, not described, keep both your affections, and your understanding in a blessed composure through Christ! For the sake of all those virtues, which adorn the Christian profession, think deeply of these things; and let me have the happiness of hoping, that both my precepts, and example have tended to impress them upon you.

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3. It is not well known whom the apostle means by the phrase *true yoke-fellow*. To say he means his wife, as some have said, is absurd; as he himself tells us he was unmarried.

3. *Whose names are in the book of life*. We need not suppose, that St. Paul literally means these persons to be beyond a possibility of falling: but only that their present behaviour was such, as was acceptable to God; and would insure their salvation, if they persevered in it.

4. See chap. iii. 1, and the note—The sense would be stronger, if the pause in the original were placed after *κρίνω*. It would then be, *Rejoice in the Lord: I say always rejoice*.

10. Your kind care in administering to my necessities (which I well know would have exerted itself sooner, if an earlier opportunity had fallen out) hath afforded
11. me great matter of religious joy. I value it more as an instance of your affection, than as a supply of my own wants. As to myself, I have learned in
12. 13. whatever state I am, to be content. Through Christ, that strengthens me, I am prepared for every
14. 15. 16. adversity. But still your kindness is very pleasing to me, as it was also at Thessalonica: for since I left Macedonia, I have received no assistance from any church, but yours. Yet I value it, as I said, not so much, because it afforded a supply to my wants; as because it was a grateful instance of your love.
17. Assure yourselves, that what you have sent by Epaphroditus, is a sufficient supply for all my necessities: and what is more, a sacrifice acceptable to God,
18. from whom you are to look for your return in the mercies of the gospel; and to whom for all his tender care to us, be attributed all glory, and honour, for ever, and ever, Amen!
19. 20. Salute all the brethren, who are with you; and receive the salutation of all here, particularly of our brethren in Cæsar's court.
21. 22. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen!

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE
PHILIPPIANS.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THIS epistle is generally supposed to have been written a little before the apostle's release from his imprisonment at Rome; and it appears to have been sent at the same time, with the epistle to Philemon.—Mr. Paley supposes, it was written about the time, when the epistle to the Ephesians was written; and founds his opinion on a variety of expressions, which are nearly the same in both epistles. The same train of ideas, he ingeniously supposes, was still in the writer's mind. See Hor. Paul. p. 208.

St. Paul first expresses his joy at the favourable accounts he had received of the perseverance, and piety of the Colossian church, He then enlarges upon the mercies of redemption—and cautions his readers against deceivers—against judaizing principles—and other species of false doctrine. He draws a picture of Christians acting uniformly under the influence of the gospel, both in their public, and private capacities; and concludes with general instructions, and salutations.

LETTER TO THE COLONIALS.

[illegible]

EPISTLE

TO THE

COLOSSIANS.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the appointment of God, (together with Timothy) to the Christian church at Colosse, grace, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Ever since I heard of your faith in Christ; and of that love, which it produced among you, I have given thanks to God; and have offered up my constant prayers for your advancement in all holiness. You have now attained that heavenly hope in the gospel; which hath wrought in you, as it hath in others, who have embraced it, the fruits of righteousness; ever since it was preached to you by our beloved Epaphras, who hath been a faithful minister among you; and hath made me happy by informing me of those pious affections, which on all occasions you discover. It is the constant subject therefore of

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11.

my prayers to God, that you may abound more and more in all Christian knowledge—and in the virtues of a holy life: that being strengthened by the hand of God, you may be enabled to bear with patience the trials of the world.

12. 13. 14.

In every thing therefore give thanks to God; but particularly for his having delivered you from heathen darkness—for your redemption through Christ—the forgiveness of your sins—and the prospect before you of everlasting happiness.

15.

STAND

Consider then with reverence the great work of your redemption—*who* hath performed it; and *what* hath been performed.—The author of this great

16. 17.

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20.

21. 22.

work is no less than the Son of God, the image of the invisible Father, existing before all creation. By him all things in heaven, and earth were created; and through him they are preserved. It is this great Saviour, who is the head of the Christian church; and who by his resurrection from the dead, hath shewn his power over death; thus giving us the assurance of immortality. For it hath pleased God to invest him with full power; and to accept his death on the cross, as the means of reconciling to himself all created beings both in heaven and on earth.—Of this blessed society you now make a part. Tho once alienated from God by your wickedness; you are now reconciled to him, in purity,

15. Erasmus, and other commentators, do not translate *πρωτογεννητον* the *first-born*, but the *first producer*.

and

and holiness, through the death of Christ; if you steadily persevere in that faith, which you have received; and in that hope, which hath been set before you.

23.

For myself, who am graciously appointed by God, the minister of the gospel, I can truly say, I rejoice in the sufferings, which I undergo for it's sake; and in compleating those prophecies, which foretold that the servants of Christ, should suffer after his death.

24.

My commission indeed reaches chiefly to you, the Gentile part of that church, to whom I open the redemption of the world by Christ—a mystery hitherto kept secret from mankind; but now revealed to all, both Jews, and Gentiles; to whom God is pleased to make known his gracious intention of offering salvation to all through Jesus Christ. This holy gospel I have preached; warning the disobedient not to reject so kind an offer—instructing the pious in that heavenly wisdom, which will lead them to everlasting life—and exercising among you those spiritual gifts, with which God for this purpose hath endowed me.

25. 26.

—For you, and the church of Laodicea; and all, among whom I have not personally preached the gospel, I am under particular anxiety: wishing you all spiritual comfort from the exercise of kind affections among yourselves—from a perfect knowledge of the religion you have embraced—and from a liberty to

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C H A P.

II.

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24. This is the interpretation, which Dr. Clarke gives of this verse. See his sermons, vol. I. p. 274.

profess openly the name of Christ; in whom the divine power, and knowledge equally reside.

4. Take care therefore lest you be seduced by artful,
5. and worldly men. For tho I am absent from you,
6. 7. my heart is continually with you; and I have a constant eye over your faith, and manners. Persevere in your professions. Trust only in Christ for all your hopes of pardon, and future happiness; with all thankfulness receiving the inestimable blessing,
8. which God hath vouchsafed unto you. In a particular manner, let me warn you against the reasonings, and philosophy of men; which will only lead you into vain, and unprofitable disquisitions: and let me
9. exhort you to rest in that Holy Saviour, of whose divinity you are fully assured, tho he was revealed
10. humbly in the flesh. In him, the Author of all
11. 12. heavenly grace, you are compleat. The blessings of his church are conferred upon you, through faith, and repentance. As circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with the Jews; so is baptism with you. By this rite, you are buried, as it were, with Christ; and raised again, in allusion to his resurrection.
13. For under the gospel you are considered as
14. having been dead in sin; but raised to life through Christ; who forgives your sin—supercedes those rites, and ceremonies, by which the Jews held their claim

12. The mode of administering baptism by immersion, as was formerly practised, is here alluded to.

to God's peculiar favour—and having vanquished
the power of Satan, hath triumphed openly over
him. Pay no attention therefore to those, who
maintain the necessity of Jewish observances. The
mosaic ceremonies were mere shadows, and types of
Christ.—Neither be deceived by an affectation of
humility in the adoration of angels; which arises
from the arrogance of human reason, intruding into
subjects beyond it's reach, without resting on any
authority; and giving up the intercession of Christ—
the only real intercession, through which we are
taught to approach the Father. Through him the
whole body of Christians are united as under one
head; and from him they receive all their supply of
spiritual nourishment.—If then you are to consider

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20. 21. 22.
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15. This, in the opinion of many judicious interpreters, refers to the abridged power of the devil, after Christianity was established, agreeably to what our Saviour himself says, *I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* Luke x. 18.

16. The *sabbaths* here mentioned are not the seventh-day sabbaths; but Jewish festivals.

18. Making intercession through angels, under the pretence of not daring to apply directly to God, was a heresy (derived in part perhaps from the Platonic philosophers) which obtained early in the Christian churches of Greece. About the third century a canon was made at Laodicea against those, who maintained this doctrine, under the name of *Angelici*.—It would be somewhat surprizing after this, that the papists should broach anew an old discarded error of apostolic times, and hold it with such inflexible obstinacy, if the history of mankind did not shew in numberless other instances, that tenacity in the minds of men, especially when united in society, with which they persevere in holding errors, they have once adopted; tho' one should suppose, that in their own minds they cannot but condemn them.

20. Here the apostle seems to draw his conclusion from what he had said in the 12th, and 13th verses.

CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

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yourself as dead to the world through Christ; why, as if living in the world, should you still be subject to these carnal ordinances, with regard to meats, and other things, which are now entirely abrogated; and depend on the mere authority of man? Why should you pay any attention to those other extravagances I have just mentioned with regard to angel-worship? All these things, whatever specious pretences they may hold out, are certainly both dishonourable to God; and unsatisfactory to man. Through Christ's resurrection you are raised to the hope of eternal life. The great conclusion therefore is, that you should set your affections on *heavenly*, not on *earthly* things. In this world you are dead: you must consider your life as laid up with Christ, in his blessed keeping, till the great day shall restore it to everlasting happiness.

Under a sense then of these high expectations, purify all those gross affections, and appetites, which have ever drawn the wrath of God upon mankind; and which you indulged, like other heathen, before your conversion. Divest your minds also of wrath,

23. In explaining this verse, I confess I have been chiefly led by the sound of the words; for, I own, I cannot understand the sense by the help of any commentator I have seen. The best interpreter, I think, is Whitby; who produces long quotations from Josephus, Philo, and other writers, to shew that the apostle alludes to the opinions, and practices of the Essenes. See also Dr. Prideaux on this subject, part II. b. V. p. 365.

3. It is a beautiful image to consider our lives, as treasures, locked up with Christ in heaven.

and

and malice—your conversation of railing, lewdness, and falsehood: always remembering, that you are now to consider your nature as totally changed. All your old habits must be laid aside; and habits intirely new taken up, after the example of your blessed Saviour; in whom all distinctions are now lost, which country, education, or condition of life, makes among men.

Consider yourselves therefore in the light of God's holy servants; and instead of those worldly lusts, and passions, which your profession forbids, cloath yourselves with affection to each other; with humility, meekness, gentleness, and forbearance; forgiving each other; and remembering the many sins, which Christ hath forgiven you. Let Christian charity, which is the bond of all virtues, as uniting them together, be the principal badge of your profession. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, and influence you, as one body, in performing acts of gratitude and praise. Let the doctrines of the gospel be the leading principles of your hearts. Let them inspire your *common intercourse*, with holy conversation—your *public meetings*, with spiritual hymns. Let them regulate your words, and actions; and make your whole lives one course of joy, and thankfulness to God through Christ.

In the mean time, let not your *private* affections be lost in *general* notions of Christian charity. Let the wife pay a proper submission to her husband—
and

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10. 11.

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19. and the husband a due regard to his wife: Let chil-
 20. 21. dren obey their parents, as God hath enjoined: and
 let parents treat their children with that kindness,
 22. 23. which may secure their affection. Let the servant
 obey his master, not on mere worldly principles;
 24. but in obedience to God, from whom he must expect
 the reward of his services. Let him consider himself
 25. as the servant of Christ; who has the same regard
 CHAP. for him, as for his master; to whom, as well as to
 IV. his master, he is certainly accountable for his wrong
 1. behaviour. Let the master also treat the servant
 with justice, and kindness; remembering always that
 he too has a Master in heaven.
2. Let me conclude with exhorting you earnestly to
 3. 4. constant, and fervent prayer; never forgetting to
 add *thanksgiving* to your *petitions*. And in your
 prayers let me be remembered—that, altho I am
 now a prisoner for the gospel, I may still be permit-
 ted to open it to mankind, in what manner God
 thinks best.
5. Act prudently in your intercourse towards those,
 who profess not the gospel; redeeming the time,
 which you yourselves have lost, when you were un-
 6. believers. Be as discrete also in your words, as in

22. The servants St. Paul here means were slaves, many of whom had embraced Christianity. Whether those converts had any idea, that a conversion to Christianity was a manumission; or whether the apostle had compassion on their station, he often dwells on topics of advice, and comfort to them.

your

your actions. Let every thing you say, be said in the spirit of the gospel; whether you answer your private adversary; or give your testimony in public.

With Onesimus, who is now become a faithful brother, I send Tychicus; from whom you may receive every information with regard to me; and through whom I hope to have a pleasing return of information from you.

7. 8. 9.

Aristarchus, Mark the nephew of Barnabas, (whom I before recommended to you) and Justus, send their salutations. Of all the Jews now in Rome, these three only have been of assistance to me in the gospel.

10. 11.

Of the Gentile Christians, Luke the physician, Demas, and Epaphras join in the same salutation—Epaphras in particular, your worthy minister; in whose prayers you are always remembered; and whose zeal for you, and the churches in your neighbourhood, is unbounded.

12. 13. 14.

Salute in our names, all the brethren at Laodicea; particularly Nymphas; and the church in his house. Let this epistle be read to the church of Laodicea; and

15.

16.

9. This Onesimus is supposed to be Philemon's slave, whom St. Paul converted. See his epistle to Philemon.

14. Demas on some worldly account, left the apostle. See 2 Tim. iv. 10. But it depends on the dates of this epistle, and of the second to Timothy, whether he left the apostle, before he is here mentioned, or after.

16. What epistle from Laodicea this was, is not known. It was probably some epistle, which that church wrote to the apostle on subjects, which he thought might be useful among the Colossian

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17. and do you read the epistle from thence: and warn Archippus to pay great attention to the ministry he has received.

18. With my kind remembrance of you all, I sign this epistle with my own hand. Forget not my sufferings in the gospel. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all; Amen!

fian Christians; and therefore he returned it with his own, to Colosse.—Others think that the epistle to the Ephesians was a kind of circular epistle, of which the church of Laodicea had a copy.

88

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE
COLOSSIANS.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

TWO EPISTLES to the THESSALONIANS.

THESE two epistles are supposed to have been written from Corinth; and Dr. Lardner imagines they were the first, which St. Paul wrote. I think this rather unlikely from the conclusion of the latter: *The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand; which is the token in every epistle.*—But it is a matter of little moment.

In the former of these epistles, the apostle expresses himself much pleased with the behaviour of his new converts. He exhorts them to continue steadily in their profession, by dwelling on the opposition, and difficulties he had met with in converting them—and on the disinterested affection he had always shewn them. He warns them against those heathen impurities, which they had so lately relinquished. He inculcates brotherly love; and settles some points with regard to the resurrection; on which subject several erroneous opinions had obtained. Lastly, he exhorts them to vigilance, and perseverance; and concludes with general instructions.

In the second epistle he encourages his converts still farther in steadiness, and perseverance; takes up the argu-

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ment

ment again with regard to the false opinions, which prevailed about the resurrection ; and concludes with advising them to give no colour to an objection, commonly made against Christians, from their being disposed to idleness.

FIRST EPISTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

PAUL, Silas, and Timothy to the Christian church established at Thessalonica, grace, and peace through God, and Christ!

It is not without sincere thanksgiving to God, that we remember your faith, and charity; your patience, and hope in that holy religion, into which you have been called—a religion, which has not only been preached to you; but proved by the gift of the Holy Ghost; and by the miracles, which we were enabled to work among you. Impressed by these things you embraced it steadily; and were able to bear the afflictions it brought upon you, through the inward joys, which it produced: insomuch, that you became examples to all the faithful in Macedonia, and Achaia: and not there only, but in all other places, your faith is spoken of; and that ready zeal

CHAP.
II.

CHAP.
I.
1. 2. 3. 4.

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270 I. THESSALONIANS.

10. zeal acknowledged, with which you received the messengers of truth; turning from idols, to embrace the only true God; and expecting the gracious promises of the gospel, on the foundation of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

CHAP.
II.

1. 2.

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6. 7.

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10. 11.

12.

What difficulties attended our first labours among you, you well know; and how zealously we preached the gospel, notwithstanding the violent opposition, and ill-usage we met with at Philippi. You are witnesses also with what purity, and guileless sincerity we exhorted you, to continue in the faith. In this great work, which is intrusted to us, we have acted as men, who are accountable to that God, who knoweth the heart. We never adapted our doctrine to any indirect views either of ourselves, or of others: we sought neither praise, nor profit. No burden of any kind laid we upon you; but treated you, on all occasions, with parental tenderness; and were ready, if it had been the will of God, to have given our lives for your sake. You well remember how laboriously we earned our daily bread among you, that our preaching might be free from every interested appearance. To you we appeal—to God also—how unblameably, and justly we lived among you; exhorting you, with a father's gentleness, to live in

2. See Acts xvi. where Paul is ill-treated at Philippi; and afterwards goes (Acts xvii. 1.) to Thessalonica, as he here tells them.

steady obedience to that holy religion, which you had embraced.

Nor were our endeavours fruitless. We thank God, that you received the gospel, not as a human institution; but as a gift from heaven; imitating the example of the earliest churches in Christ; which were established in Judea. Like them also you were persecuted by your own brethren. After the Jews had killed their own prophets, and put to death the Lord Jesus, we had nothing to expect from them but the extremity of persecution. And we received it in full measure—partly indeed on your account; for one of the great causes of their malice to us, was our preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.—But the measure of their iniquity is now full.

In these, and all your persecutions, I would I were able to comfort you by my presence, as well as by my epistle. It was my intention indeed, more than once, to have visited you: but I have been detained here by ill-disposed persons. My affections are always with you: for nothing is to me a matter of such joy, as the hope of presenting you holy before God, in the great day.

This strong affection impelling me, I continued at Athens alone, and sent Timothy to you, to establish your faith; and to encourage you to undergo,

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19. 20.

CHAP.
III.

1. 2. 3.

16. The end of this verse relates to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem.

18. Satan is often put for an adversary, or opposer. Get thee behind me, Satan.

with

4. with Christian fortitude, those persecutions for the
 5. cross of Christ, which, you are well informed, we
 6. must all prepare ourselves to suffer. So early, as
 7. when I was last with you, I assured you of this, and
 8. we have now experienced it. I feared lest these trials
 9. of your faith might have been too severe for you;
 10. and, in my tenderness, I could not forbear sending
 11. Timothy to inquire after your situation. His return,
 12. with the joyful account of your faith, and charity,
 13. and affectionate remembrance of me, hath dispelled
 all my fears; and given me joy in the midst of my
 distresses. I feel myself revived by your steadiness;
 and I give thanks to God for the joyful accounts I
 have heard of you; praying night, and day, that I
 may be permitted to see you; and make up every
 deficiency in your faith. May the Lord God, and
 our Saviour Christ direct my way unto you! and
 make you increase more and more in kindness, and
 love; that you may have holy confidence in that day,
 when our blessed Lord shall appear in glory!

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2. 3.

Let me then beseech you, my brethren, and earnestly exhort you, to observe strictly that rule of duty, which you have received. You remember the injunctions we laid upon you against those vices, which are practised in Gentile countries—against for-

1. See an account of this transaction in Acts xvii. 15. These occasional references of one part of scripture to another, certainly add to the arguments for it's authenticity.

4. Bowyer conjectures, that *οικος* should be written *σινος*, *his tabernacle*—that is, his body.

nication in particular. A much purer life will be ex- 4. 5.
 pected from you, than from the ignorant heathen.
 You know, that these impurities cannot be practised
 without injury to others, as well as yourselves. You 6.
 know also, as we have often warned you, that they 7.
 will draw the judgment of God upon you. God 8.
 hath called the Christian to purity of life. The im-
 pure Christian therefore not only despises the law of
 man; but the law of God also, and the impulse of
 his Holy Spirit.

With regard to brotherly love, I need not say any 9.
 thing to you. Your own hearts inform you, that
 this duty is impressed upon you, by a greater teacher
 than I am, even by God himself. And indeed I
 have nothing to charge you with on this head: I 10.
 shall only exhort you, that in this, and all other
 Christian virtues, you may increase more, and more.

I could wish you also to intermeddle as little as 11. 12.
 possible, with the affairs of the heathen people,
 among whom you live. Follow industriously your
 own callings; and shew your Gentile neighbours,
 that you mean not to be a useless burthen upon
 them.

6. The phrases to go *beyond* and *defraud* have reference, accord-
 ing to the best commentators, to the impurities mentioned before.
 Impurities of this kind certainly involve others in guilt, as well
 as ourselves—*In any matter*, may be better translated, *in this*
matter.

12. It was one of the great objections, which the heathen
 made to Christianity, that it was an idle profession. Tertull.
 apol. cap. 42.

13. With regard to your deceased brethren, I hope
 14. your Christian faith will keep your sorrow within
 15 16. 17. bounds. If you believe the resurrection of Christ,
 18. you cannot doubt of theirs: and whether we be
 alive, at that great day; or whether we be dead,
 CHAP. it matters not; when Christ shall come to judgment,
 V. all the faithful shall be united with him. Let this
 1. be your consolation. But at what time these great
 events shall be brought about, is a matter, which
 2. we are no way concerned to know. One thing we
 3. all know, that the day of the Lord will come like a
 4. *thief in the night*; and find the world in a state of
 5. 6. full security.—God forbid, my brethren, that you
 7. should be thus found! You are the children of the
 day. Preserve that character. Be vigilant, and at-
 tentive. Night is the season of sloth and riot.
 8. With these things the children of the day are at
 variance. Be you, like good centinels, always under
 arms; girt round with the breast-plate of faith, and
 love; and taking the hope of salvation for a helmet
 9. —that hope, which was purchased for us by our
 10. Lord Jesus Christ; who died for our sins, and is the

17. I do not pretend to understand this very difficult passage; and therefore I have given it a general signification. Indeed I think it is rather presuming to endeavour to explain it. "*We who are alive, says the apostle, shall not prevent them which are asleep—and the dead in Christ, shall rise first.*" These passages apparently relate to some great event, at the consummation of all things. And tho we have other hints, in different parts of scripture, particularly in the Revelations (xx. 4, 5, 6.) which seem relative to the same event; yet the whole is so obscure, that I think we ought to be very cautious in our interpretations.

great

great foundation of our comfort, and happiness, both in this world, and the next. Let these things therefore fortify you in your spiritual warfare. Continue to exhort, and strengthen each other. 11.

Fail not in a due respect to those, who are your spiritual guides; and esteem them for the sake of their labour.—Be at peace among yourselves. Rebuke the disorderly. Encourage the humble. Assist the weak. Shew forbearance to all. Return not evil for evil; but be kind, and affectionate, not only among yourselves, but to others. Let holy joy fill your hearts. Let it continually break out in prayers, and praises; and thus confirm in yourselves, more and more, the grace of God.—Attend to preaching; but prove the doctrine by the word of God.—Abstain from the very appearance of evil: and may the God of peace sanctify you; so that you may be pure, and holy at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; in whose gracious promises let us continually trust.—Make us the constant subject of your prayers. Salute all the brethren in our name; and let this epistle be read in your assembly. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen! 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28.

19. *Quench not the Spirit*, Lord Barrington (Misc. fac. vol. I. p. 140) ingeniously supposes this expression alludes to the flame of fire, under which appearance the Spirit originally descended.

21. It appears from the beginning of the second chapter of the next epistle, that false teachers had already begun to infuse their doctrines.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO
THE THESSHLONIANS.

SECOND EPISTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

PAUL, Silas, and Timothy to the Christian church at Thessalonica, grace, mercy, and peace from God, the Father; and the Lord Jesus Christ!

With thankfulness to God we hear of the increase of your faith, and charity; and we mention every where that Christian spirit, with which you bear persecution, as an example to all the churches of Christ. And herein, my brethren, are the righteous judgments of God fulfilled. They who persecute you, shall draw punishment on themselves; and you who are persecuted, shall receive that rest from

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5. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment, &c. That is, we conclude from your innocent sufferings here, that God must be a righteous judge hereafter.

T 3

your

8. 9. your labours, which the Lord shall give you at the last great day. He will then punish the wicked, and
 10. disobedient as they deserve; and will receive his
 11. saints into mansions of never-ending glory. We pray therefore, that your faith may bring you off conquerors in all your trials; and that you may be
 12. found worthy of acceptance with God—that the gospel of Christ may be glorified by you, and you by it, through the grace of God.

CHAP
II.

1. 2. 3.

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7.

And now I beseech you not to regard the deceptions of those, who would persuade you, that the day of judgment is at hand. Before that day, the church hath many a fiery trial to pass through: and among other kinds of opposition, prophane, and blasphemous attempts will be made to set up the creature, in the room of the Creator. You may remember, that I told you of these things, when I was with you. They shall not speedily come to pass; but all of them shall be revealed in due time. This
 opposition

8. This punishment seems to include both those, who act contrary to the light of nature, and that of revelation.

11. *The good pleasure of God's goodness* is a strong expression of the divine benevolence.

1. *By the coming*, and *by our gathering*, should be translated, *About the coming*, or *concerning*, &c.

2. *Nor by letter*: as if they had put some false glosses on his former epistle.

4. See this very difficult passage, with regard to *the man of sin*, applied to the papal power, by Bp. Newton in his *Diff. on Prop.*—and by Bp. Hurd in his eleventh sermon on prophecy; and expressly treated by Dr. Benson in his *Dissertation on the man of sin*.—*Σεβασμια* may apply to any thing held in high reverence.

7. They who interpret these passages of scripture, of the papal power, suppose that the power that *with-holdeth* or *letteth*, is the Roman

opposition to the truth hath already begun to work; and will continue; tho it may be prevented for a time. At length the wicked opposers of the truth shall be finally beaten down; who with all the arts, and deceptions of Satan, beguiled others; after having first rejected the truth themselves. As they have *pleasure* in wickedness, they will forget God; and become a prey to their own delusions.

For you, my brethren, in the mean time, we give thanks to God. From the first of our publication of the gospel among you, you listened to the truth; and fully believing it, were sanctified through the Spirit. By us you have been called to salvation: let us then exhort you to stand fast in all the doctrines you have received: and may the merciful, and gracious God, and Jesus Christ, on whom all our hopes depend, comfort, and establish you in all goodness!

Finally, my brethren, pray for us, that the word of God may have as free a course among the Gentiles

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11. 12.

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14. 15.

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CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

Roman government. When that should be dissolved, the Roman hierarchy should supply it's place. Tertullian, Augustine, and Chrysostom all agree in saying that Anti-Christ should not appear, till after the fall of the Roman empire.

8. *Wicked.* ἄνομοι, lawless. It is remarkable, that the pope in the canon-law is said to be, *Omni lege humana solutus.*—*Nec totus clerus, nec totus mundus potest judicare papam.*—*Consume* (ἀναλυσαι) *to waste by little, and little.*

12. *Damned.* Κριθῶσι; judged.

15. In the original, the word παραδόσεις, or *traditions*, is used; but the papist will remember, that by *traditions* nothing is here meant, but *instruction immediately from the mouth of an apostle.*

T 4

here,

here, as it hath had among you : and that God would, in his good time, deliver us from the persecutions of such as oppose the truth. He is the only foundation of trust. In him we have confidence, that you will live up to the religion you have received. May your hearts be filled with the love of God, and the patient expectation of the coming of Christ!

6. With apostolic authority I injoin you to withdraw from every person of your society, who behaves so as to scandalize his profession. In our behaviour I am persuaded you will find nothing,
7. which we may not propose as an example. Remember how we laboured, each in his profession, that we
8. might not be chargeable to others ; not claiming any exemption as ministers of the gospel, which we might have done ; but rather choosing to make ourselves an
9. example ; instructing each of you, that *he who will not work, hath no right to eat*. And we are sorry to hear, there are many among you, who by troubling themselves more with other people's affairs, than
10. 11. their own, need this reproof.—For the future, we command them, on the authority of Christ, to work quietly for their own maintenance : and do you set them a proper example. If they still continue refractory, bring them to shame by separating them from your assemblies ; still however observing the end of reproof, which is only to reclaim.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

8. See a note on 1 Thess. iv. 12.

May the God of peace fill you with all peace! 16. 17.
The Lord be with you! I write this salutation
with my own hand; as my usual signature in all my
epistles.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you 18.
all; Amen!

17. This *token in every epistle* might be a mean to prevent imposition, as many false epistles were probably written in the apostle's name.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO
THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAPTER III

THE first of the three great principles of the system of the world is the principle of the unity of God. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

The second principle is the principle of the plurality of worlds. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

The third principle is the principle of the plurality of worlds. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

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The eighth principle is the principle of the plurality of worlds. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

The ninth principle is the principle of the plurality of worlds. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

The tenth principle is the principle of the plurality of worlds. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

The eleventh principle is the principle of the plurality of worlds. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

The twelfth principle is the principle of the plurality of worlds. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

The thirteenth principle is the principle of the plurality of worlds. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

The fourteenth principle is the principle of the plurality of worlds. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

The fifteenth principle is the principle of the plurality of worlds. This principle is the foundation of the whole system, and without it the system would be a mere chaos.

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P R E F A C E

TO THE

TWO EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY.

IN the first of these epistles the apostle, having reminded Timothy of the early charge, that had been committed to him in preaching the gospel, gives him particular instructions—with regard to public devotions, and assemblies—with regard to the behaviour of female-converts—and of pastors; to whom he recommends a proper mode of opposing error. He then instructs him with regard to the government of the church; and concludes with an exhortation to particular duties.

He begins the second epistle with pastoral exhortations; and presses the necessity of avoiding trifling disputes, which draw men aside from the great points of religion: concluding with an account of the adversaries, which he himself had met with.

Both these epistles were written to one of the first Christian bishops; and contain the great outlines, both of the episcopal office, and of that of all the other ministers of the church of Christ.

P. R. B. F. A. G. E.

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Both these epistles were written by one of the first Christian bishops; and contain the great outlines of the Christian religion, and of the duties of all the members of the Church of Christ.

FIRST EPISTLE

OF

ST. PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

CHAP.

I.

PAUL, an apostle by the immediate appointment of God, unto Timothy my son in the faith; grace, mercy, and peace, through our Saviour Jesus Christ!

When I went into Macedonia, I left you at Ephesus to have an eye on certain teachers, whose discourses to the people were made up of such trifling matter, as administered nice questions, rather than real im-

4. St. Paul, in this verse, and afterwards, speaks particularly against that attention, which the Jews paid to genealogies. It was carried among them to a very great height. Jerome, somewhere speaking on this subject, says, *They were as well acquainted with genealogies from Adam to Zerubbabel, as with their own names.* This attention to genealogies was at first necessary in ascertaining the descent of Christ; and the completion of the prophecies. But it afterwards tended only to draw the mind from more useful pursuits.—The Jewish converts were sometimes studious to claim kindred with Christ. To this also the apostle might perhaps allude.

provement.

5. provement. I desired you to press home on all
 your converts, that the great end of religion is
 6. 7. charity; proceeding from an honest heart, a good
 conscience, and a sincere faith: which doctrine, easy
 as it is, hath been perverted by many, who set up
 to teach, what they do not understand.
8. Nor do they represent us fairly. We by no means
 despise the law. We consider the ceremonial part of
 9. 10. it as an introduction to Christianity: and the moral
 law—not indeed as able to justify mankind—but as
 11. the means of restraining wickedness. This, you
 know, hath ever been the tenor of that doctrine,
 which I have taught, through the mercy of God,
 12. who hath enabled me to teach it; tho I was formerly
 13. one of it's greatest persecutors. But God had mercy
 on my ignorance; and shed his grace upon me;
 14. 15. making me an example of that great truth, that
 Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners—a
 16. 17. subject, on which the praise and gratitude of man-
 kind can never be exhausted.
18. Let me intreat you then again to press home the
 true doctrines of Christianity as an able minister,
 under the appointment of the Holy Spirit of God.
19. Let it be your constant doctrine, that faith, and a
 good life must go hand in hand; and that where
 the latter is wanting, the former can never exist.

18. The word *παραγγιλια*, I think, shews, that this verse has reference to the 3d, and 5th verses of this chapter, in which the same word is used.

Among these defective Christians may be numbered Hymeneus, and Alexander; whom I have treated with such severity, as, I hope, will lead them to repentance.

20.

But to be more particular in my directions to you; I exhort you, first, in your religious assemblies, to pray for all mankind; and among them for the princes, under whose government you live, that you may be allowed the profession of your religion. This is agreeable to the spirit of that gospel, which is extended to *all mankind*. For, as there is one God; so there is one mediator, who laid down his life for *all*. And it is indeed to the Gentile part of the world, however opposite this doctrine may be to Jewish prejudices, that I am appointed an apostle. It is not therefore only in a Jewish temple, or synagogue, where the prayers of the righteous are heard; I injoin Christians to hold their public assemblies in

CHAP.
II.

1. 2.

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4. 5.

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1. I should suppose the words *deprecari*, *procurare*, and *intercedere* are not synonymous; tho it may be difficult to affix a proper meaning to each. The first perhaps signifies *prayer in our necessities*—the second, *the deprecation of evil*—and the third, *intercession for others*.

5. *There is one God, and one mediator between God, and man, the man Christ Jesus.* This verse Dr. Priestly quotes as an argument against the divinity of Christ. He quotes it *without* the context: with it, it has a different air. *God our Saviour will have all men to be saved; and come to the knowledge of the truth: for (ver. 5) he is equally the God of all; and Christ is equally the Saviour of all.*—This verse has had the misfortune to be misrepresented also by Beza. Beza did not hold the doctrine of *universal redemption*; and therefore translates *πᾶντας ἀνθρώπους*, *quosvis homines*.

all

all places; and to pray for all mankind, without animosity, and prejudice.

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CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

Exhort also your female converts to modesty of apparel; to cloath themselves with Christian virtues, instead of costly attire: and let them not preach in your assemblies; nor do any thing contrary to the original subjection, which they owe to man. I mean not however to encourage any useless austerities. A state of marriage is very consistent with a state of salvation: all I require from them in that state is, the faith, and love, and purity of Christians.

With regard to the government of the church, the office of a bishop must be considered as a very arduous employment. A bishop must be a man of unexceptionable

11. On laying the various texts together, in relation to a woman's teaching in public, (see a note on 1 Cor. xiv. 34) I am inclined to establish this distinction. If the woman were immediately inspired, as many were in those days, *she might preach*; if not, *she was to learn in silence with all subjection*. Whereas the man was allowed to preach, whether he were immediately inspired, or not.

15. There are many interpretations of this text. What I have given, appears to me the most natural, and easy—especially, as it is very probable from other passages of St. Paul (see the ivth and vth chapters of this epistle, and Heb. xiii. 4) that a state of celibacy was then beginning to be thought purer, than a state of marriage.

2. *The husband of one wife*. It does not appear, that if a polygamist embraced Christianity, he was ordered to put away all his wives except one; but the apostle here fixes an indelible stigma on the practice of polygamy, by excluding from the ministry all, who had been polygamists before their conversion.—The Greek church takes this text in so odd a way, that it is held *absolutely requisite*

unexceptionable character—no polygamist before his conversion—active—serious—regular—ready to receive the ignorant, and desirous to instruct them—temperate—gentle—moderate; and free from the least taint of covetousness. Let him first shew, by the regularity, and decency of his own family, how well able he is to govern the church of God. Nor would I have a new-convert appointed to this office; lest he may not yet have acquired that steadiness, and humility, which are necessary to discharge it. but let him have the most ample testimony in his favour from the Jews, or heathen he hath left; lest any aspersions on his past life should prevent the effects of his ministry.

Let the deacon also be a man of modesty, and simplicity; temperate, and moderate; uniting pure manners with sincere faith. Till he have approved himself such let him not be admitted. The polyga-

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quisite in a bishop to be the husband of one wife; and what is still more singular, when the wife dies, the episcopal office of the husband ceases. At least that used to be the practice. See Perry's account of Russia, p. 230.

11. The word *δυναμεις* in our translation is rendered *wives*; but as the apostle is speaking of the ministers of the church, and as we know, there was formerly an order of women called *deaconesses*, who assisted at the baptism of female converts, and were employed in attending the sick, and in other offices of charity, it is most likely, that these are the persons meant.—The old interpreters of scripture gave this sense to the passage. *Παρι των το αξιωμα της διακονιας εχουσων λεγει.* The apostle speaks of those, who held the office of *deaconesses*. Chrys. in locum.—I have taken a little liberty in transposing the words, as it makes the sense rather easier; but it is not at all necessary to the interpretation I have given.

mist

11. 12. 13. mist I set aside; but consider it as a great recommendation to the church, if a man have carefully instructed, and governed his own family. Thus living, the deacon shews himself worthy of a higher office.—Let the deaconesses also be women of unexceptionable characters. Busy, talking, indiscrete
 14. 15. women are very improper to be employed.—I intend soon to see you; but lest I should be prevented, I transmit these instructions; that, in the mean time,
 16. the church may suffer no detriment.—Great, no doubt, is the work, in which we are engaged. The redemption of man is a scheme full of greatness, and wonder. God was manifest in the flesh—adored by angels in heaven—proved on earth by prophecies, and miracles—received into glory—and shall hereafter be preached, and believed throughout all the world.

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2.

3. 4. 5.

But tho Christianity depends on the strongest evidence, we are assured by the Spirit of prophecy, that many, misled by false principles, and corrupt practices, shall apostatize from the truth—that they shall engage men in unnecessary restraints; and fill their minds with trifling, and absurd exceptions; which are contrary to the purity of religion, and the

13. *Great boldness.* A good conscience, and faithful discharge of a man's duty, give him a confidence in his work, which nothing else can give him.

16. See this difficult text detailed, and explained in Bp. Hurd's sermons. Vol. II. p. 332.—The expression *God manifest in the flesh*, is capable, I think, only of one sense.

benignity

benignity of God. Oppose these corruptions with steadiness. Oppose them by a holy example. Teach your converts, that outward observances are of no avail: but that a pious life produces happiness both here, and hereafter. This is true religion; and it is in a great measure for holding this doctrine—faith in Christ, and good works, in opposition to outward observances, that I have suffered so much persecution.

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10.

Be you therefore a faithful follower of my steps; and let your gravity, and piety discountenance those, who can object only to your youth. Exhort your converts publicly and privately; conscientiously discharging that trust which the Holy Spirit, and the imposition of the hands of the presbytery have laid upon you. These two great points keep ever in view—your life, and your doctrine. Make them the only objects of your attention. They are the great means of your own salvation; and of the salvation of others.

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15. 16.

CHAP.
V.

1. 2.

3. 4.

With becoming modesty rebuke the old—the young with the tenderness of a brother—the female penitent with cautious gravity.—Let the church seek out destitute widows; and remind the children, and near relations of widows in general, to maintain the indigent of their own families, when they are

10. In the text it is, *Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those, that believe*; which words can only mean that he is universally the Saviour of all mankind, who believe.

5. 6. 7 8. able. He who neglects this duty, neglects even
 9. 10. what the heathen practises. The widow, who is
 taken into the service of the church, must long have
 been dead to the world: she must long have been
 esteemed for piety; domestic virtues; and works of
 charity. Till she be threescore years of age, I would
 not have her eligible. Nor would I have those
 chosen, who have engaged lightly in second mar-
 riages. Young widows, tho devoted to the church,
 11. 12. 13. may, to the great scandal of it, engage in heathen
 14. 15. 16. alliances, as some have done. At least, there is often
 a levity in them, which is not agreeable to so sacred
 a dedication. Let them therefore, if they chuse it,
 engage again in the married state; and shew a lauda-
 ble example in the education of their families. By
 no means however let them be burthen some to the
 church, if their relations can maintain them. The
 church hath real objects enow to provide for.

17. 18. The pious pastor well deserves his maintenance,
 on the principles both of the law, and the gospel.

—Hear

10. *If she have washed the saints feet*, means only in the Jewish
 idiom, *if she hath entertained them kindly; or done good offices to them.*

17. This expression, in the original, *Let the elders, that rule
 well, be counted worthy of double honour*, applies more happily to
 the case of the pluralist, than any other in the Testament. It
 admits so easy a version "Let the pious pastor have two livings."
 I mean not however to enter into any argument on this question:
 all I mean to say, in commenting on this text, is, that I think
 it nothing to the purpose.—It seems plain indeed from the *con-*
text, that *τιμη* signifies more than an *empty honour*—an *emolument*
 rather of some kind. But as the apostles, and early Christians
 seem

—Hear no accusation against a presbyter, unless supported by two, or three witnesses. But if he be proved guilty, let him be publicly rebuked, as an example to others. With all earnestness, and in the name of God, and Christ, I charge you to perform the duties of your function, without prejudice, and partiality. Fill the offices of the church with great caution. Few consider sufficiently the danger of partaking in other mens sins. Your own example will always be pure—(indeed, as far as your health is concerned, I have thought you too abstemious,) but the necessity of caution in filling the offices of the church, arises from the great deceit, and plausibility of mankind. The characters of few men are so conspicuous, as not to require a very nice examination.

The Christian religion introduces no change in the civil rights of mankind. Let the servant therefore be taught obedience to his master, whether he be a heathen, or a Christian. He who carries his ideas of gospel-liberty beyond this, involves his hearers in questions, debate, and animosity. It is not the *station of life*, which is the *source of happiness* to the religious breast. True piety wants no succours from the world. The enjoyments of life accompany us

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CHAP.
VI.

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seem not to have had the least idea of expence beyond the necessities of life; it is not to be supposed, that the emolument here mentioned, could extend farther. All good pastors deserved a maintenance. None wanted, or wished for more. To be counted *worthy of double maintenance*, I should think, therefore means only to shew, how very well they deserved a maintenance at all: they were doubly worthy of it.

8. only to the close of it. What then need we more
9. 10. than food and raiment? A thirst after worldly enjoyments is wholly incompatible with the virtues of a Christian; and all who are misled by worldly things, will find mischief, and ruin in the end.

11. Let your disinterested behaviour then set an ex-
12. ample of Christian virtues to a selfish world. Go on manfully to combat the enemies of that faith, under the banners of which you serve: and before God, and Christ, I beseech you to maintain uncorrupt, the
13. 14. doctrines you have received; waiting with silent
15. 16. hope, the fulfilling of those promises, which no mortal can conceive. Instruct the rich not to depend on the good things they enjoy; but on God, the giver of them. Instruct them to grow rich in
17. good works—in *giving*, rather than in *hoarding*. Instruct them to lay up for themselves a *treasure*, that will *last for ever*.

20. I conclude, as I began, with exhorting you to preserve faithfully the doctrines, that have been committed to you; and to avoid all trifling, difficult, and unnecessary questions. Curious inquirers have often carried on their researches, till they have lost themselves in infidelity.—The grace of God be with you. Amen.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE
TO TIMOTHY.

SECOND EPISTLE

OF

ST. PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

CHAP.

I.

PAUL, by the immediate direction of God, appointed an apostle, and preacher of that gospel, which proclaims eternal life—to my beloved Timothy, grace, mercy, and peace!

The remembrance of our last affectionate parting makes me desirous of seeing you again. But however that be, it is a great happiness, that I can thank God with sincerity for that unshaken faith, which you have hitherto maintained; and which hath, in a manner, descended to you by inheritance. Again therefore I write, to excite in you, more and more, a holy zeal in the discharge of that office, which hath been conferred upon you. Fear not the opposition of men; but trust in the power of God. Consider the evidences of religion; and submit with me to bear affliction for the sake of that gospel,

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9. 10. unto which the free grace of God hath called us—
 that gospel, which having been originally planned
 before the world began, hath now in Christ abolished
 death; and thrown a new light upon immortality.
 11. —This is the gospel, which I am appointed to
 preach to the Gentiles; and for which also I suffer
 12. persecution, trusting in those faithful promises, which
 13. cannot deceive. Unite with me therefore in the
 courageous maintenance of this faith—in the uniform
 14. practice of the duties, which it enjoins—and in the
 conscientious discharge of that function, in which it
 hath engaged us.
15. I find myself deserted by all the Asiatic Christians;
 16. 17. 18. among whom are Phygellus, and Hermogenes. In
 the midst of this desertion, neither shame, nor any
 other worldly principle, hath prevented Onesiphorus
 from ministering to me at Rome, as he had done

9. *Who hath called us—according to his own purpose, and grace.* No doubt the gospel was given by the free grace of God; that is, mankind were totally undeserving of it. But this doctrine is surely much perverted, when it is drawn to say, that the salvation it brings, is therefore given arbitrarily to one, and denied to another. The heathen, we doubt not, who live up to the light God hath given them, receive the benefit of the atonement of Christ.

10. *Φωτισω* does not properly signify *to bring to light*; but rather *to throw light upon*.—Mr. Parkhurst supposes the word here relates to the completion of God's promises in a Redeemer; which is a natural, and easy sense. See his Lexicon.

12. *To keep that which I have committed*—that is, my soul.

16. *He was not ashamed of my chain.* The apostle speaks of that chain, which he wore as a prisoner at large, according to the Roman custom. See a note on Acts xxviii. 16.

before

before at Ephesus. May God reward his pious labours, and may you imitate his fortitude! May the grace of God strengthen you in all things; and enable you to instruct those, who may instruct others!

CHAP.
II.

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11. 12. 13.

Your station is that of a soldier of Christ. You have the difficulties of your profession before you; and if you wish to please your Superior, you must withdraw your mind from every thing but your duty. In the heathen games, an eager contest, regulated by the laws of the course, precedes the crown. The husbandman labours, before he tastes his crop. I need not point out the application of these allusions to the Christian minister. Remember always your suffering Saviour. His death preceded his ascension. How can I repine at my own sufferings, and imprisonment, when I consider them as the gracious means, in the hands of God, of drawing the Gentiles to salvation? It is the great comfort of our holy religion, that if we die unto sin, we shall live with Christ; and if we suffer for him, we shall be exalted also with him. On the other hand, if we renounce our profession, we may bring ruin on ourselves; but we cannot alter the promises, and threatenings of God.

10. The word *εκλεκτοι*, or *elect*, has evidently no relation to the election, or reprobation of individuals; but relates plainly to the Gentiles, as *elect*, or *called by God*, into a partnership, with the Jews in all the benefits of the gospel.

14. 15. Press these doctrines therefore earnestly on your converts. Charge them to lay aside their frivolous disputes; and like a Jewish priest, presiding at a sacrifice, teach them to sever the nobler parts from the ignoble. An attention to these frivolous things leads to impiety. Hence sprang the heresy of Hymeneus, and Philetus; who now deny the resurrection, and have drawn a party after them, tho' nothing can be plainer, nor stand firmer, than our hopes in this great article. We have God's promise; if on our part, we lead holy lives.—But we are not to wonder at this defection. As in a great house there are a variety of utensils, some of an elegant, and others of a coarser construction; so in the church of Christ, there will ever be a difference among it's members: but our business is to endeavour to make ourselves such vessels, as are *appropriated to the master's use*; in which no dregs are contained; but liquors of the purest kind.
21. I cannot therefore press you too earnestly to avoid these novel doctrines. A sound faith, and good life, are all
- 22.

15. The expression in the original, *rightly dividing the word of truth*, is thought to allude, as I have here rendered it, to the priest's office in sacrificing.

22. The words *νεωτερικας επιθυμιας*, seem to be more literally translated, as we have them, *youthful lusts*; but I rather prefer the sense here given, which some critics have approved. The verb, *νεωτεριζω*, properly signifies to *innovate*. I see not therefore why the adjective may not signify *new*. And as to the word *επιθυμια*, it is taken in so many different senses in the New Testament, that if we argue either from it's *use*, or *derivation*, we may apply it to any

all that a Christian has to concern himself about. I have just informed you, that these frivolous questions lead to impiety. I may add also, that they produce animosity: and how unbecoming a contentious temper is in a minister of Christ, I need not tell you. Gentleness, and patience should be characteristic in him. By these he endeavours to draw the straying Christian from vice, and error; and lead him to the acknowledgment, and practice of the truth†. Corruption, in a degree, is inseparable from the purest church—wickedness will prevail—and the form of religion, instead of the spirit of it, will possess the minds of men. They will not be satisfied with liv-

23. 24. 25.
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CHAP.
III.

1. 2. 3. 4.

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6. 7. 8.

any thing, on which the *mind is bent*. St. Peter uses it in this sense. 1 Peter i. 12.—If then the *terms allow* this interpretation, the *context* seems to *require* it. The whole tenor of the chapter opposes rather erroneous doctrines, than impure practices.—Besides, a caution against *youthful lusts*, one should suppose, unnecessary to a person, whom the apostle himself (1 Tim. v. 23) blames rather for abstemiousness; tho' in the midst of the refinements of philosophy, it is possible he might have been in some danger of being led aside by *new fancies* in religion, in opposition to those genuine doctrines of Christianity, which are touched in the beginning of this chapter.

† I am obliged, in order to preserve the harmony of composition, to give this passage in the same modernized form, as the other parts of the epistle: but no language can reach the pleasing simplicity of the original. There is a mildness in the expression, which indicates the thing. “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach; patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.”

8. Jannes, and Jambres are instanced among those, who opposed the truth. It is remarkable, that Jannes is mentioned with Moses, in Pliny's Natural History, as an eminent magician. See his index.

ing

9. 10. 11. ing in error themselves, unless they lead others after
12. 13. them; and boldly oppose the truth. While God permits it, this contest between truth, and error must subsist; and increase. Be not however discouraged. Persevere in the duties of a Christian; and remember, that persecution, and religion are ever nearly allied.

14. Your education hath been superior to that of the
15. generality of men. Study those scriptures therefore,
16. 17. which from a child you have revered. They will throw the best light on the dispensation of the gospel; and, besides the instructive lessons they contain, will furnish the Christian teacher with every needful assistance.

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2. 3. 4.

Exercise then, I earnestly charge you before God, all the functions of your ministry. Preach, rebuke, exhort: but do every thing with humility, and gentleness. You and all your successors, shall be called on for the exertion of every conciliating virtue. A general corruption shall overspread both teachers, and hearers. All this the minister of Christ must bear. He must learn to suffer: but he must also oppose falsehood, and steadily maintain the truth.

5.
6. For myself, I expect shortly to give my last great
7. 8. testimony to the truth of the gospel. My labours
are

15. He had known the holy scriptures from a child, because his mother was a Jewess. See Acts xvi. 1.

6. There is great elegance, and force in the original word, *σπένδομαι*; my blood is about to be poured out like a libation. But I have

are almost over; and I have only to hope, with my fellow-labourers, for the gracious acceptance of my great Master.

I could wish you to be here with me, as soon as you can. Most of my assistants in the gospel I have sent on several charges. Demas, preferring the world to the gospel, hath deserted me. Luke alone is with me. I shall want the assistance of Mark: bring him with you; and remember the papers, and other things which I left at Troas. I have been in-

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14. 15. 16.

have omitted the metaphor, as it is too bold for a less animated phraseology than the original.

10. Some who date the epistle to the Colossians after this to Timothy, do not suppose, that Demas had apostatized; but had only behaved, in some respects improperly: for in Coloss. iv. 14, he is mentioned respectfully among Paul's friends. The case of Demas depends intirely on the dates of the two epistles.

13. Among different conjectures about the *cloke* mentioned here, some have supposed it a *cloke-bag*; others have supposed it the apostle's Jewish dress, which he should soon want; leaving his Roman dress, till he came into those parts again.

14. The only person mentioned here by name, who made opposition to the apostle, is one *Alexander, a copper-smith*; probably the same person who is spoken of in the first chapter of the first epistle. As Timothy, who was Bishop of Ephesus, is cautioned against him, it is probable, that Alexander was an Ephesian, sojourning among other strangers at Rome; where he took an opportunity to oppose the apostle's preaching. St. Paul says, he had *greatly withstood his words*: but there is no reason to suppose any argumentative opposition. Alexander the copper-smith was probably connected with his countryman Demetrius the silver-smith; and opposed the gospel, just as that artisan had done—not by argument; but by tumult. St. Paul's expression to Timothy leads to this sense. *Ὁν καὶ σὺ φυλάσσω*; *observe him*—have a *prudent eye upon him*—as he might have been a popular, as well as an ill-disposed person. It is probable also that this is the same person, who is mentioned as a leader of the infidel Jews at Ephesus. See Acts xix. 33.

deed

17. 18. deed both opposed, and deserted by many during my imprisonment. God will deal with the adversaries of our faith according to his own good pleasure. May their opposition never appear against them! A gracious God however has supported me, and will support me, under all my sufferings; which will give efficacy, I doubt not, to my preaching among the Gentiles.

19. 20. 21. All the brethren here desire their salutations. Erastus is still at Corinth. Trophimus I have left sick at Miletum.—I shall depend on seeing you here before winter.

22. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you! Amen!

14. *The Lord reward him*, &c. as we have it in our translation. The proper tense of the word *reward* here, in the original, deserves as much to be investigated, as any word in the New Testament. *Αποδοῦν* is the reading our translators have taken; which plainly puts an unchristian curse into the apostle's mouth. But if they had lived in later days, when collating MSS. was more in use, they would no doubt have taken the future tense, *αποδοῦναι*, *the Lord will reward him*; which they might have found in some of the best, and most authentic MSS. That the apostle did not mean a *curse*, is evident from the 17th verse, in which he prays, that it may be averted.

17. *Out of the mouth of the lion*, is supposed to refer to Nero; before whom in person, it is imagined, the apostle was brought. See a note on Philip. ii. 27.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE
TO TIMOTHY.

P R E F A C E

OF THE

EPISTLE TO TITUS.

TITUS was president, or bishop of the church established in Crete; the inhabitants of which island were very licentious both in their principles, and practice. In the former they were chiefly corrupted by the Jewish zealots, who were settled amongst them. Against the tenets introduced by these people, many of the precepts of this epistle are pointed; particularly those relating to servants, and governors; as the judaizing Christians seem scarcely to have allowed the authority of any governor, but God.—The other part of the epistle, with regard to the ministerial office, is nearly the same, with the instruction given on that head, in the foregoing epistles, to Timothy.

PREFACE

OF THE

EPISTLE TO TITUS.

11

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EPISTLE

TO

TITUS.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

3.

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6. 7. 8. 9.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ; and preacher of that gospel, which promises eternal life; and which, tho now first opened, was designed before the world began—to Titus, my beloved convert, grace, mercy and peace!

The principal purpose for which I left you in Crete, was to regulate, and carry on there, the great work of conversion, which I had begun; and to ordain ministers in the several towns.—I repeat the instructions, I gave you on this head. The minister of the gospel must be a person of blameless life. I object to a polygamist: but would have an orderly family esteemed a recommendation. He must consider himself in the light of God's steward. He must be gentle; temperate; untainted by avarice; devoted to God; charitable to man; and above all things, well

well established in the truth of religion, that he may be prepared, as opportunity offers, either to instruct, or reprove.

20. 11. 12. Great occasion has a minister of Crete in particular to exert all his prudence, and knowledge: for the people are false, and licentious, both in principle, and practice; and characterized as such, even by their own writers. Nor are they, in a small degree, corrupted by the infusion of Jewish prejudices.

23. 14. Treat them therefore with plainness. Point out to them the inefficacy of Jewish traditions. Shew them how inconsistent they are with the intention of the gospel. Inform them, that purity does not consist in abstaining from particular meats; but in an

15.
16. unpolluted mind: and press upon them, that all who make profession of Christianity, be they Jews, or Gentiles, without observing it's moral precepts, are abominable in the sight of God.

CHAP. II.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
6. 7. 8. These sound doctrines inculcate steadily, but with proper distinctions, on all ranks of people; holding up, in your own life, a pattern of virtuous behaviour. This will grace your doctrine; and tend more than any thing, to silence, and reconcile opposition.—Remember especially to instruct servants

9. 10.

12. St. Paul quotes this verse from Epimenides. The meaning it conveys is, that the *Cretans were a false people; and united in their character, the ferocity of the wild beast, and the luxury of the domesticated one.* As to their *falsehood*; *ἡμετέριον* was a proverbial expression for *lying*.

to obey their masters ; informing them, that piety in their humble station is one of the greatest ornaments of the gospel of Christ.

Thus, like a good pastor, lay before your converts the great end, and intention of Christianity—that it is a system of religion instructing us in the conscientious discharge of our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourselves : and in the belief, and hope of that happiness, which we shall receive hereafter, through the death of Christ ; if we answer the end of this holy institution by purifying ourselves from the corruptions of the world. Let these doctrines then be the chief subject of your exhortations ; and rebuke with that authority, which over-awes contempt.

Preach subjection to magistrates—a readiness to do good—an abhorrence of doing injury. Point out the propriety of gentleness, and forbearance on all occasions ; considering the wickedness and follies, in which we ourselves were immersed, before the goodness of God in Christ redeemed us from sin ; and made us heirs of salvation, through his grace, not our own deserts. It is in vain, tell your converts, to talk of faith, without good works. On these insist, and not on frivolous questions, which produce only debate.

12. 12.

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CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

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9. See a note on 1 Tim. i. 4.

Notwithstanding

10. 11. Notwithstanding however the gentleness, and forbearance, which are due on all occasions, some church-discipline may be necessary; and he, who continues obstinate in his wickedness, after a second admonition, must be severed from your communion. I mean not however this severity against mere opinions: I should exercise it only towards such, as were self-convicted by the wickedness of their own actions.

12. I shall soon send either Artimas, or Tychicus to you. On his arrival meet me at Nicopolis, where I mean to continue during the winter. But before
13. you come, send Zenas, and Apollos; and supply

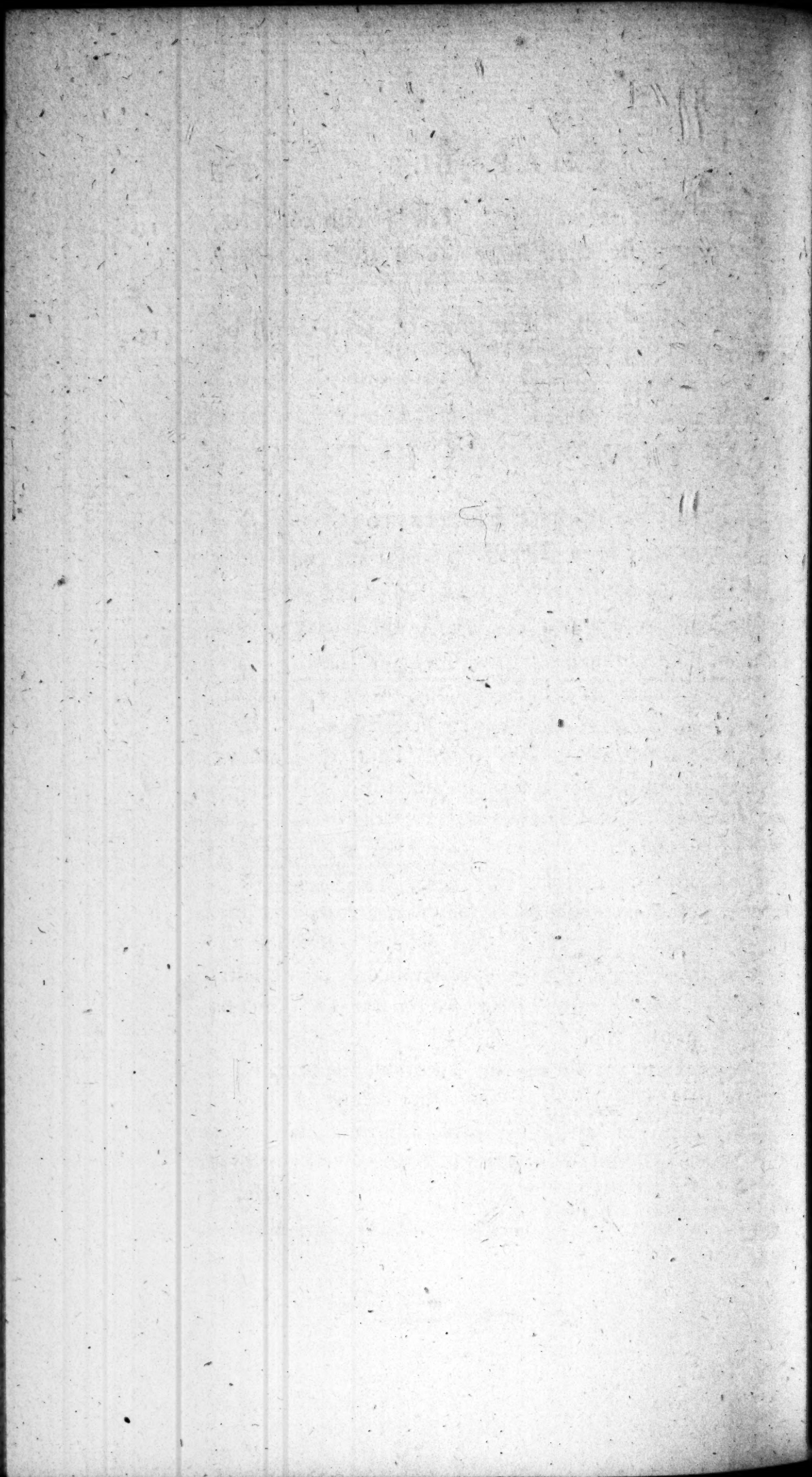
11. I have given what appears to be the apostle's meaning. To the idea of heresy he affixes a *bad heart*, as well as an *erroneous opinion*. *A man that is an heretic, says he, reject—that is, such an heretic as is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*—The same restriction, which the apostle lays on church-discipline, should by parity of reason act as a restriction also on the disturbers of the peace of the church by controversy. Every man has a right to his own opinion, and to the enjoyment of it: but no man has a right to publish it in fundamentals, to the offence of others, against opinions long established; unless, those opinions come under the apostle's idea of heresy.—It may be said, the truth can never be injured by debate; and freedom of debate is the protestant's charter.—It is true: the truth can never be injured by debate; if the debate reached those only, who are capable of debating. Others, a controversy may mislead.—And as to the protestant's charter, it were well, if the example of the early protestants had more weight. It was the scandalous sale of indulgences for sin, which first opened their mouths. Transubstantiation, and other opinions, tho in themselves absurd, as they were not openly marked with the apostle's characteristics of heresy, were at first treated with some respect: till by degrees, so many things were found to be wicked, that other things began to be suspected; and a total change ensued.

them

them with what is wanting. The Jewish converts, 14.
I hope, contribute their share also in these necessary
expences.

All here salute you. The grace of Jesus Christ be 15.
with you all! Amen.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO
TITUS.



P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

PHILEMON had been converted by St. Paul to the Christian faith. Onesimus, his slave, the bearer of this epistle, had run away from him; and had probably robbed him. At Rome, where he endeavoured to lie concealed, he fell in the way of St. Paul, through some accident, which is not communicated to us. By him he was converted to the Christian faith; brought to a thorough sense of his wickedness; and sent back to his master, with the following epistle.

Some fastidious critics have shewn an inclination to rid the sacred canon, if possible, of this epistle; which they seem to think of very little importance to the Christian church.—There are many considerations however, which I should hope, would obtain more favour in it's behalf.—First, it shews the admirable address of St. Paul in converting sinners. By what means of application he opened a way to the heart of a rude slave; dead as it appears to all principle; is matter well worth our notice.—The pleasing, obliging manner likewise, in which the apostle applied to Philemon, the slave's master,

is equally interesting. The whole epistle indeed is a model of beautiful composition.—Lastly, it is a noble lesson to the Christian minister, to see with what heartiness, and zeal an apostle engaged in converting one of the lowest of all human beings; and how affectionately he treated him, after he was converted. The soul of a slave was to him of equal value with the soul of a prince.—It is very probable, that this epistle was written at the same time with the epistle to the Colossians; as may be seen from many circumstances of internal evidence, on a comparison of the two epistles,

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

CHAP. I.

PAUL, and Timothy to Philemon; and his household, grace, mercy, and peace in God and Christ !

1. 2. 3.

It is with great satisfaction, and thankfulness to God, that I hear of your faith, and charity—that, on all occasions, you have not only shewn a Christian temper ; but given proofs of it also by your charitable actions.

4. 5. 6.

As I have been the instrument, through God, of your embracing this faith, I might speak with the authority of a spiritual father on the subject of this letter : but laying that aside, I chuse rather to ad-

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9. Paul the aged. Dr. Whitby's calculation makes Paul at this time about sixty-three ; supposing him at the death of Stephen to be about thirty-eight.

10. 11. dress you on motives of Christian charity. The subject of my address, is your slave Onesimus; whom, now converted, I send back to you, changed from a faithless fugitive into a penitent Christian.
12. 13. Receive him as you would me. Very gladly should I have detained him here; that in your room he might have been of comfort, and assistance to me
14. in my imprisonment. But I did not chuse to do any thing in this matter, without your concurrence; knowing, how much more agreeable it is voluntarily to confer a benefit, than to have it drawn from us by necessity.
15. How kindly in this matter has the providence of God acted towards us. You lost an unprofitable slave for a short time; that he might become serviceable to you for life.—And yet a slave is not now
16. perhaps the name, by which you would call him; but rather a brother. I have esteemed him as such; and so will you. He is now your brother in a double sense; as a man, and as a Christian.
17. Whatever regard therefore you have for me,
18. shew it to him. If he hath wronged you of any thing, place it to my account. I will repay you.
19. I speak *literally*: I mean not to balance a temporal
20. account with a spiritual one. Give me therefore the

11. *To thee unprofitable, but now profitable.* In these words the apostle might perhaps allude to his name; *Onesimus* signifying *profitable*. Names of this kind were given to slaves, in expectation of their bringing *advantage* to their masters.

20. *Refresh my bowels.* The word in the original *αναπαύω* is very expressive; *Ease that commotion in my heart.*

happiness

happinefs to believe you will grant my request.—

But why need I fo ſpeak? Your kindnefs to me, I know, will do more, than I deſire. 21.

I would have you prepare me a lodging; as I truſt, that your prayers, and mine will procure me deliverance, and bring us ſpeedily together. 22.

Epaphras, my fellow-prifoner; and all my fellow-labourers here ſalute you. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all! Amen! 23. 24. 25.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO
PHILEMON.

CHAP. I.

...to believe you will grant my request
...I to thank you for the kindness to me
...I will do more than I can
...I would have the same as I
...and your power, and mine will be
...and I am as free as the air
...my fellow-prisoner; and all my fellow-
...The place of our land
...I shall be with you all Amen

END OF THE FIRST TO
THE SECOND

P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THIS epistle seems to have been intended for the use of the whole Jewish people, however dispersed; tho directed chiefly to those of Judea. It is generally supposed to have been written originally in Greek; tho it's language is confessedly more elegant, than the language of St. Paul's other epistles. This hath occasioned some doubt of it's authenticity; to which it's not being inscribed with the apostle's name hath added a kind of sanction. But this was probably omitted *on purpose*; as it was evident, (see Acts xxii. 21) that St. Paul had made himself very obnoxious to the Jews: and as to the language, Dr. Lardner supposes, that the whole plan and sentiments of the epistle were Paul's (of which there is strong internal evidence) but that he might have employed some amanuensis, (as he did on other occasions) who expressed his thoughts in purer Greek, than he commonly used himself.

In this epistle, which contains a noble view of the Christian dispensation, the apostle first dwells on the dignity

nity of Christ's character; and on the superiority of the gospel to the law, 311—He shews, that, according to prophecy, the gospel could not have been administered by angels, 312—and that the Messiah must have partaken of human-nature, 314—His superiority to Moses is next shewn; from whence the apostle exhorts the Jews to believe in the gospel, 315—The rest of God is next applied to *that rest*, which the gospel promises, 316—Christ is delineated as a high-priest: superior to the Jewish high-priest, 318—The weakness of the Jewish Christians is pointed out in not apprehending these doctrines, 319—Melchisedeck is held out as a type of Christ, 320—and from hence the dignity of Christ's priesthood is inferred, 322—The apostle recapitulates what he had said, 323—He then considers the whole Jewish œconomy as a system of types, 325—realized in Christ, 326—purification, in the legal sacrifice, he says, was only obtained by blood; which was a type of the blood of Christ, 328—From hence the apostle exhorts to a full dependence on this sacrifice, 330—He next exemplifies faith in many instances, 331—Then exhorting to faith, and piety; he concludes with practical instructions, 336.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

GOD having through various dispensations gradually opened his will to mankind, hath at length revealed it fully by his Son; who being endowed with infinite power, first created the world—then redeemed it—and afterwards resumed his ancient glory: being of a nature infinitely superior to all those heavenly ministers, by whom the law was dispensed. This is very evident from observing his character as marked by the prophets. Is it a language ever

CHAP.

I.

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3. The Son is here represented as the express image of God; an idea, which some writers have explained, by the impression, which the wax receives from the engraving of the seal. Philo calls the Logos, *Χαρακτήρ καὶ εἰκὼν Θεοῦ*. The very character, and image of God.

5. As the Messiah was predicted to spring from the house and lineage of David; and as Solomon so far answered this character, and

ever used to angels, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?* Was it literally, or typically, spoken of Solomon, *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son?* And was it not expressive of the dignity of this great character, in his exalted state, when the prophet calls upon *all the angels of God to worship him?* The character of angels is that of *ministering spirits*. Far differently the prophet speaks of the Son, He is represented as having power, and dominion over all created beings—as establishing his throne in justice, and equity—as the Creator of all things—and as existing from eternity. So again, when the prophet speaks of his exalted station, as subduing the grand enemies of mankind, sin, and death; the expressions surely are not applicable to angels, who were not the givers of the law, and the gospel; but merely the instruments employed in those services.

CHAP.
II.

1. 2.

All these prophetic characters of the Messiah should awaken our attention to the truths of the gospel. The inference is plain. If the transgression of the

and was besides the most illustrious of the Jewish kings, and founded also the temple of Jerusalem; he was considered as a type of Christ.

5. Pf. ii. 7.

5. 2 Sam. vii. 14. 1 Chron. xxii. 10.

6. Pf. xcvi. 7.

7. *Made his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire—made them like the wind, and like lightning.*

7. Pf. civ. 4.

12. 13. Pf. xlv. 6, 7. cii. 25, 26, 27. cx. 1.

Mosaic

Mosaic law, revealed only through the mediation of angels, subjected the Israelites to so great a penalty, as we find it did; what have we to answer for, if we neglect a law, given by the Son of God; and confirmed to us, not only by the strongest human testimony; but by the authority of miracles, and the visible power of the Holy Ghost?

That no angelic ministration dispensed this last great revelation of God's will, is plain from the words of David; *What is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him for some time lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory, and honour; and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.* Now these words, tho primarily spoken of Adam, and his descendants, can by no means have their sole reference to man, or his dominion over the works of creation; which we evidently see they have not. But they refer directly to the divine Minister of the new covenant; and

5. By *the world to come*, is commonly understood the *restored world*, or the gospel state. Many Jewish writers, and early Christians were of opinion from these passages in St. Paul, and some others in Daniel, (particularly chap. x. 13, 21) that the world was divided into different districts, and put under the government of angels: and that in particular the Jewish nation was committed to Michael. St. Paul might have a view to this opinion, when he says the Christian world was subject only to Christ.

7. *A little*, might be rendered, *a little while*; as it is in the margin of our Testament.

9. Our Saviour, quoting this psalm, applies it, as St. Paul does. Matt. xxi. 16.

mark

mark his character in strong terms. They point out Jesus who was *made lower than the angels* during his state of humiliation; but after the price of redemption was paid, *crowned with glory and honour*.

10. Now it pleased God, however contrary to Jewish prejudices, that the great Author of our salvation should take upon him the nature of those, whom he redeemed; and pass through a state of suffering.

11. 12. 13. Thus he is represented by the prophets, calling mankind *his brethren*—and in other places, calling them *his children*. All these passages in the prophets point out the human nature of the Messiah. He partook

14. of the same flesh and blood with those, whom he redeemed, that by subjecting himself to death, he

15. might vanquish the power of the devil; and deliver

16. all mankind from the bondage of sin. Instead of appearing in an angelic form, he appeared as one of

17. the descendants of Abraham; and thought it proper to be, in all respects, like his brethren; that he might be a merciful high-priest before God, atoning

18. for the sins of the people. What an encouragement is it to us, who follow his steps, that we are succoured in all our temptations, by one, who in every respect hath been tempted like ourselves?

12. Ps. xxii. 22.

13. Is. viii. 17, 18.

14. The devil is here said to have *the power of death*, as his tempting our first parents was the original cause of death.

But while you reflect on the humanity, and humiliation of Christ; consider, on the other hand, my brethren, his dignity. One of the greatest characters, which you acknowledge, is that of Moses. Faithful, no doubt, he was in that appointment, which God intrusted to him. But between Christ and Moses, the same difference is established by God, as we see between the master, and the servant, of a family. Moses precedes as a preparatory law-giver, opening the way for something that was to follow. Christ comes after, fulfilling the types of the law; and completing that institution, which Moses had only shadowed out.

Of this holy institution, my brethren, we are a part, if we persevere faithfully in our profession. Remember that passage in the psalms, in which the Israelites are exhorted to hear God's voice; and not to *harden their hearts, as their fathers did in the wilderness*; when they persisted forty years in an obstinate course of unbelief, and disobedience; and provoked God at length to forbid their entering the promised land. Let this example of your forefathers be an instruction to you. They disbelieved God. Take care that you do not disbelieve the revelation

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10. 11.

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3. As the apostle had before preferred Christ to angels, so now he prefers him to Moses. Christ was at the head of his economy. Moses was only a steward.

4. See Numb. xii. 3. in which Moses is expressly called a servant.

7. Psalm xcv. 8.

of his will through Christ: but daily incourage, and exhort each other, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. All depends on your holding steadily your profession to the end; and taking every opportunity of increasing in Christian virtue. Some there were among your forefathers, who did not revolt from their obedience: but the greatest number were not permitted to enter the promised land; but fell in the wilderness.—

Once more therefore let me repeat my exhortations, that this example of unbelief may have it's full weight: and that none of us may forfeit the promise of that rest, which is offered to *us*, as well as to *them*; and which they forfeited through unbelief.

CHAP.
IV.

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The Christian's rest depends on the same promise, as that of the Israelites. Observe those passages of scripture, which mention *the rest of God*. After the creation was finished, God is said to *rest from his work*. He is said also to *rest the seventh day*—and David makes an application to certain persons, who were to *enter into that rest*. Since therefore some must enter into that rest; and the ancient Israelites in the wilderness, to whom it was first applied, did not enter into it; it is plain, that David had reference to some *future rest*—that is, he had reference to

5. Pf. xcvi. 12.

8. By *Jesus* in this verse, is meant Joshua, whose name, and office in leading the people to a place of rest, made him a remarkable type of Christ. In the margin he is called Joshua; and

to some rest, besides that of the land of Canaan: for that *rest* had been already compleated by Joshua.

—We conclude therefore that God's holy servants are to expect some *future rest*; and that this rest is to be of a holy, and a spiritual kind, when they shall rest from their earthly labours, as God is said to rest from his work.

Let it be our great endeavour then to enter into this holy rest; and make that use of the infidelity of our forefathers, which we ought; considering especially, that in the dispensation of the gospel there is still a nicer discrimination to be made between good and bad—and that the very thoughts, and intentions of the heart, if impure, become guilt in that discerning eye, before which every part of the creation is open. Having therefore so great an high-priest, Jesus the Son of God, who is now making intercession for us in heaven, let us hold fast our faith in so merciful a deliverer. For, as I just observed, we have not now an high-priest, who cannot feel our infirmities; but one, who was in every respect

and it is only misleading ignorant readers, to call him Jesus in the text.

13. *Naked and open.* Some suppose an allusion is made here to sacrificing. As it then appears, whether the victim is pure, or faulty; so, &c.

14. St. Paul here resumes the subject of the high-priest, which he had dropped at the beginning of the *iiid* chapter. The comparison of Christ with Moses; and of Christian immortality with the Jewish Canaan, had interrupted his argument.—*With whom we have to do: προς ον ημων ο λογος: of whom we speak.*

15. See chap. ii. 18.

tempted

16. tempted as we are. Let us then come boldly to the throne of grace, assuring ourselves, that we shall find from the true mercy-seat of God, sufficient help in all our distresses.

CHAP.
V.

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And now considering Christ in the light of an high-priest, let us see how much his character, under this idea, is exalted above the Jewish high-priest.—In the first place, the Jewish high-priest was a frail, and erring man: and tho he might have compassion on those, for whom he officiated; yet his compassion was founded on a different motive from that of Christ. He pitied the frailties of others from feeling his own: and therefore in offering sacrifices for them, he always included himself.—In the second place, tho no man could take upon himself the Levitical priesthood, unless called by God, as Aaron was; yet Christ was not only appointed by God, but an had everlasting priesthood conferred upon him, of which Melchisedec's was a type.—Again, the prayers, and supplications, and sufferings of Christ were infinitely more efficacious, than the atonement of the Jewish high-priest. Having shewn himself superior to death, and given us an example of obedience, and resignation to the will of God; he was consecrated, as it were, through sufferings; and making an atonement for the sins of the world, he became an eternal high-priest, of whom, as I observed, Melchisedec was a type.

6. See Pf. cx. 4.

Of this resemblance between Christ, and Melchisedec I could say many things to you, which would shew more fully the superiority of our Lord to the Levitical high-priest: but I fear you are not yet disposed to receive them. From the time of your conversion one should suppose, you might have become teachers of religion: instead of which, I fear, you have not yet digested the first principles of it. Strong meats are the food of those who are arrived at full age; but milk and lighter food, of children. I fear you are to be numbered among the latter.

However leaving for the present the principles of religion, repentance, faith, baptism, the communication of spiritual gifts, the resurrection of the dead, and a future judgment, let us proceed, through God's permission, to these deeper points. As for those who have apostatized from the truth, after having been enlightened by the gospel—convinced by it's evidence—and sanctified by it's blessings; one should suppose it utterly impossible they should ever again be restored. Like ground, which answers no longer to the pains of the husbandman, but in return for it's culture, produces only weeds, they must be left to the effect of their ingratitude, and infidelity.

—Notwithstanding however what I say, I am persuaded better things of the generality of you. And you may be assured, in particular, that God will not forget that charity, by which you have so often evidenced your religion; and in which I hope you will constantly persevere; after the example of all those

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12. 13. 14.

CHAP.
VI.

1. 2. 3.

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12.

those holy patriarchs, your forefathers, who through faith, and patience, at length inherited the promises.

13. How strict a performer of his promise God is to his faithful servants, may be concluded from his oath to
 14. Abraham, that he would bless, and multiply him;
 15. which promise was first performed in a temporal way; but is now fully compleated in the gospel.
 16. Thus God condescending to the manner of men, who consider an oath as the most decisive proof,
 17. confirmed his promise in that way to his most obedient servants. And thus we Christians, who inherit the same promise, have the same foundation
 18. for the performance of it—God's word confirmed by his oath. On this we should depend in all our distresses, raising our thoughts to the completion of it
 19. by that blessed Redeemer, who hath entered for us into the Holy of Holies—our great high-priest, and intercessor; of whom (to resume an argument) Melchisedec was a type.

CHAP.
VII.

1.

2.

This holy man, who was king of Salem, and priest of the most high God, met Abraham returning from the defeat of the five kings; and blessing him, received at his hands the tenth of all he had taken.

—Now here the first thing that strikes us, in the comparison between this prince, and Christ, is the name; Melchisedec signifying *king of righteousness*;

20. Resumed from ver. 10, chap. v.
 1. See Gen. xiv. 18.

and Salem *the city of peace*.—We are next struck with the mode of his descent. The Levitical high-priest preserves his genealogy pure from Aaron. But of the lineage of Melchisedec nothing is said. Neither his birth, nor his death is noticed. Hence therefore he becomes a type of that great high-priest, who had neither beginning of days, nor end of life.

—Then again consider the greatness of that character, to whom even the patriarch Abraham paid tithes. The Levitical priest, who by the law received tithes of the people, may be said to have paid tithes himself to Melchisedec, in the person of his progenitor Abraham.—Consider also the superiority, which that great high-priest assumed in blessing our father Abraham: for undoubtedly it is the greater, who blesses the less.

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5. 6. 7. 8.
9. 10. 11.
12. 13. 14.

3. *Without father, without mother, &c.* This is a very common way in speaking of those, whose ancestors are unknown. Thus Livy says, *Patre nullo, matre serva*, l. IV. And Seneca (epist. 108) speaking of the two Roman kings, Servius Tullius, and Ancus Marcius, says, *Alter patrem non habet; alter matrem*. *Ἀπατρ, καὶ ἀμητρ*, were common expressions among the Greeks also, to distinguish people of unknown families. Among the Jews it was always conceived, that altho the Messiah was to be of the house and lineage of David, there was still some mysterious obscurity with regard to his birth. Thus his enemies remarked, that Jesus could not be the Messiah, because they *knew him to be the carpenter's son*: Mark vi. 3. And again, *When Christ shall come, no one shall know whence he is*, John vii. 27.—The application of such a phrase to Christ, as that *he had neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, can mean nothing, I think, if it do not mean a unity with the Father.

5. 6. In the text the *blessing*, and *receiving of tithes* are united. I thought it might be easier, and might place the resemblance in a stronger light, to separate them.

From what hath been said then it appears first, that the Levitical priesthood can, by no means, be considered as a perfect institution; for then the order of Aaron needed not to have been superseded by the order of Melchisedec.—Secondly it appears, that as there is a change in the priesthood, there is a change also in the law. For as the people received the law under the priesthood; a new priesthood implies a new law. The tribe of Judah, from which our Lord sprang, had evidently no connection with the altar.—Thirdly, it is evident, that from the excellency of the new priesthood, the law must also take a new excellence; and must be changed, agreeably to the nature of the priest, from a ceremonial ritual, into a spiritual service. Otherwise what advantage arises from a priest, who is to *live for ever*? The law of Moses is disannulled, because being weak, and imperfect, it was unable to draw it's observers to perfection. The covenant of the gospel leads directly to God.—Again, let us consider the confirmation of this covenant, *The Lord swears, saith the prophet, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.* By no such designation was the Levitical priest consecrated. Therefore the new covenant, of which Christ is the high-priest, is the more excellent, because the more strongly confirmed.—From the same prophecy we are as-

19. The neuter *edn*, is often taken for *persons* as well as *things*.

21. See Psalm cx. 4.

ured, that it is unchangeable also. In the Levitical priesthood death was continually introducing change: but Christ, says the prophet, is established a *priest for ever*.—Lastly, from laying all these considerations together, we may rest assured, that we have an eternal, unchangeable high-priest, who is continually making intercession for us; and that we shall find in him a Redeemer, who is able to save all, who come to God in his name. Holy, and spotless himself; of dignity sufficient to make an atonement; he offers,—not like the Levitical priest, an offering first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people—but he offers himself, once for all, a sacrifice for the sins of mankind; thus completely fulfilling that great prophecy of the psalmist (given long after the law) that a new priesthood should be consecrated, not subject to the infirmities, and changes of the Levitical one; but absolutely pure, holy, and eternal.

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C H A P.
VIII.

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The sum of what I have said, is this: we Christians have a high-priest as far superior, in every instance, to the Jewish one; as a constant intercessor at the throne of God, is to a priest officiating in an earthly temple. Such intercession may be considered as making him a *continual high-priest*; tho the great sacrifice is offered; and he is now removed into heaven. Temple-sacrifices the Jewish priest was suf-

28. Pf. cx. 4.

5. See Exod. xxv. 40, and xxvi. 30.

ficient to offer. But here is a service, which no earthly priest could perform. In fine, then, the Jewish high-priest was only a mere type of the heavenly one; as the Jewish tabernacle was of the throne of God. This was clearly expressed at the giving of the law; when Moses was ordered to make every thing *after the pattern*, which, in a heavenly vision, was shewn to him *on the mount*. And indeed there is as much difference between the two ministrations; as between the temporal promise of a land of Canaan, and the heavenly one of an eternal habitation.

6. Now this great change of one covenant for the other, is founded on the deficiency of the law, and the excellence of the gospel. If the first had been perfect, there had been no room for a second. Thus
8. the prophet Jeremiah speaks: *Behold the days come, when I will make a new covenant with the house of*
9. *Israel, and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of*
10. *Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I*
11. *regarded them not*, saith the Lord. The prophet having thus far shewn God's intention to supersede the Jewish institution, proceeds farther to shew the nature of the Christian religion. He touches on the gracious intention of it, as a covenant of mercy to

8. Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.

mankind;

mankind; he declares God's promise of bringing the doctrines of it home to the consciences of men by his Holy Spirit; and concludes his view of it, by mentioning the grand point of difference between it, and the Jewish religion—*it's making a full atonement for the sins of mankind*. He calls it, you observe, a *new covenant*; which plainly implies the abolition of the *old*.

This great intended change appears also from the whole economy of the Jewish tabernacle, which prefigured something, that was to succeed. It appeared itself to be a mere temporary matter. The *outer* part of it, called the sanctuary, contained the golden candlestick, and the table of shew-bread: the *inner* part, or the Holy of Holies, was separated from the other, and contained the golden censer, wherewith the high-priest made the yearly atonement—the ark—the golden pot with manna—Aaron's rod—the tables of the covenant—and the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; the figurative intention of all which I shall not here particularly examine. In the first of these apartments the priests performed their daily service: but the second was a sacred recess, shut out from all inspection; into which the high-priest alone entered; and that but once a year,

CHAP.
IX.

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4. It appears from the text, that the ark contained these several things: whereas we are assured (1 Kings viii. 9) that it contained only the two tables of stone. *Ex*, therefore must refer to the tabernacle.

8. to make atonement, with sacrifice, for his own sins, and the sins of the people. All this ceremony was plainly intended to shew, that something was yet wanting to open the Holy of Holies to all mankind:
9. 10. and that the various services performed, (consisting merely of observances, of no value in themselves,) were figures only of that perfect sacrifice, which should afterwards take place.
11. 12. All these types, and ceremonies Christ hath realized; offering his own blood, instead of the Levitical sacrifice of goats, and calves; entering the true Holy of Holies; and making for us, not an *annual* but a *perpetual* atonement. And well may we suppose, if the sprinkling of the blood of animals purified the Jew from all his legal defilements; that the blood of Christ offered, through the divine appointment, without spot to God, will purge us from sin. Thus Christ becomes the mediator of a new, and better covenant; redeeming by his death, and restoring to an eternal inheritance, even those who lived under the first covenant.
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16. Now the death of a testator is absolutely necessary to give force to a testament. While the testator liveth, the testament, or covenant, is not binding.
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18. Accordingly the first testament, to make it a proper type of the second, was consecrated with blood.

16. The word Διαθήκη signifies here both a *testament*, and a *covenant*. St. Paul perhaps considered a *divine covenant*, as a *testament*, because of it's being *unalterable*.

Thus Moses after he had read the law, took blood; and sprinkled the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined. And thus the tabernacle, as soon as it was erected, together with all it's utensils, were sprinkled with blood; without which indeed the law hath no idea of remission. God thought it proper therefore thus to represent that sacred blood, which was afterwards to be shed for the sins of mankind. And as the Holy of Holies is the representation of heaven; so Christ, the great mediator, enters a state of blessedness,—not like the Jewish high-priest, annually with the blood of animals; but once for all, on this last great revelation of God's will; offering his own blood, as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. As man also is appointed to undergo the two great states of death, and judgment; so the redemption of the

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19. St. Paul says, that Moses sprinkled the book, as well as the people, with blood. But the passage of Moses (Exod. xxiv. 7, 8) to which St. Paul alludes, does not mention the book as being sprinkled; either in the LXX, from which St. Paul commonly quotes; or in our translation, which is taken from the original. The vulgate is ambiguous: *Accipiens sanguinem vitulorum, ipsum quoque librum, et populum omnem asperxit.*

21. In Exod. xl. where the consecration of the tabernacle is related, blood is not specified. But, no doubt, St. Paul, who was so well versed in the Jewish ceremonial, understood, that a purification through blood was meant by the words *hallowing*, and *sanctifying*: and accordingly Josephus expressly says, that *Moses consecrated the tabernacle, and all it's utensils with oil, and blood*: *ἁγιάσεν τὴν σκηνὴν, καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτὴνσκεύη, ἐλαίῳ, καὶ τῷ αἵματι.* Antip. III. 9.

22. In cases of inability a portion of fine flour is substituted as a sin-offering, for the life of an animal. Levit. v. 11.

world by Christ, answers to these two states. He first dies for sin; and afterwards appears without any idea of atonement, merely as our judge.

CHAP.
X.

1. 2.

The whole legal ritual then is a mere typical representation: nor were it's sacrifices ever intended to make a full atonement. We prove this from the

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very nature of them. If they could have made a *full atonement*; what end was answered by their repetition?

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The worshipper, once purged, would have been freed from sin. But that was not the case. In

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every annual expiation, all past sins were again remembered. In the nature of things indeed it is not possible, that the blood of bulls, and of goats can take away sin. And in this light we consider that prophetic

2. *For then they would not have ceased.* The vulgate, the Syriac, many good MSS, and even the margin of our own translation, have it, *For then would they have ceased.* The *negative*, in our translation, intirely destroys the sense; unless indeed the sentence be read interrogatively.

5. The passage from Psalm xl. from whence this verse is quoted, is singular. The words, *but a body hast thou prepared*, are in the original Hebrew, *mine ears hast thou bored*; alluding to the Jewish custom of boring the ears of slaves. Our translation of the Psalms renders it totally without any meaning at all; *mine ears hast thou opened.*—The interpretation is, that Christ is represented as submitting to the will of his Father, with all the obedience of a willing slave.—But still how comes it, that St. Paul, instead of saying, *mine ears hast thou bored*, says, *a body hast thou prepared me?*—This is singular; but the truth is, the apostle, instead of quoting from the original Hebrew, quotes from the septuagint; which renders the original Hebrew very happily, as the apostle has quoted it. Slaves were always considered both by the Jews, and Greeks, as *mere bodies*. Thus Raguel gave Tobias half his slaves, cattle, and money—*σώματα, και κτήνη, και ἀργύρια*: and thus the slaves of the men of Sichem, are called *τα σώματα*.

See.

prophetic passage in the psalms; in which Christ, coming into the world, is thus represented addressing the Father: *Sacrifices, and offerings for sin Thou hast rejected: but Thou hast provided a body for an offering. I embrace, O God, thy gracious designs: and agreeably to the prediction of all thy holy prophets, shall fulfil it.* Thus Christ by substituting his own body in the room of the offerings, and sacrifices of the law, plainly establishes the one on the abolition of the other.—By this holy sacrifice then we are justified; giving up every idea of justification by the law—not trusting in an earthly high-priest, and the atonement of temple-sacrifices—but in a high-priest, who having offered himself a sacrifice for sin once for all, sat down for ever on the right hand of God; triumphing over death, and making a full atonement for all his faithful servants. For this is the sense of the prophecy of Jeremiah, which I quoted above. Having spoken of the *new covenant*, which God was about to make; and the new laws he was about to establish; the prophet adds, that in this new covenant, a complete atonement should be made for the

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See also Rev. xviii. 13. Many instances also occur in heathen writers. The LXX therefore, by a very happy interpretation, translate the act of *boring the ear*, by the word *σωμα*, which includes the true sense; and *here* signifies both the *body offered*, and the *form* (the *μορφή δαυδ*, Phil. ii. 7.) in which our blessed Lord appeared. Some translate the word *κατεργασω* *marked*, instead of *prepared*; and so make it allude to the brands fixed on slaves. See Saurin's serm. VI.

15. 16. See Heb. viii. 10, 12.

fins

18. sins of mankind. In fine then, if you allow the force of this prophecy thus far; you must conclude farther, that the offerings, and sacrifices of the temple-service are now rendered entirely useless.
19. 20. Since therefore, my brethren, we have thus a new, and living way opened to us into the Holy of
21. Holies, by the blood of Christ; and since we have an eternal high-priest presiding there, making constant intercession for us, let us draw near with full
22. faith, and assurance of his mercy. Let us reject all dependence on legal purification; and lay the stress on the purification of the heart. Let us steadily
23. persevere in the profession of our faith; raising our minds with the promises we have received. Let no
24. prejudices against our brethren subsist among us; but let us shew our charity by an unreserved communication of kindness. Of one thing let me particularly remind you: continue regularly your Christian assemblies; and return not to the temple-worship. Even in a worldly light it is prudent; for a dreadful calamity, you may assure yourselves, hangs over this
26. 27. unhappy country.——But the great point to be considered is, that if you apostatize, you reject the only means of drawing you to the truth, which God hath thought proper to promulge. You give up the sa-

18. Whoever examines seriously St. Paul's application of the Jewish rites of atonement, to the death of Christ, in several parts of this epistle, but especially in some of the foregoing passages, must either, I think, deny the authenticity of these passages, or believe the doctrine of the atonement.

crifice

crifice of Christ; and place yourselves among those, who having now no farther means of conversion, must await the just indignation of God. Will that God, think you, who punished every transgression of the Mosaic law with so much rigour, see without offence the stronger evidence of the gospel treated with contempt—the Son of God despised—his great atonement rejected—and all the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit set at nought? Remember that awful sentence, *Vengeance is mine; I will repay*, saith the Lord. And again: *The Lord shall judge his people*. Consider what it is to fall into the hands of a Being, whose attribute is *eternal justice*. Recollect the conflicts you endured after your first conversion—the reproaches, and persecutions you underwent—and your steady adherence to me, and others of the apostles of Christ; suffering the loss of your worldly possessions through faith in an eternal inheritance.

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Cast not away therefore that faith, which is the earnest of this eternal inheritance. Shew yourselves God's faithful servants; trust him for your reward; and be not discouraged, if you are not immediately delivered. In God's good time you shall receive

30. Deut. xxxii. 35, 36.

38. Hab. ii. 3, 4.—Beza held the doctrine of the *perseverance of the saints*; and in order to accommodate this passage to his own opinion, he translates *καὶ ἐὰν υποσλήται*, (to which the foregoing clause is the nominative case) by introducing a new nominative of his own, *at si quis se subduxerit*.

assistance.

assistance. Remember the words of the prophet: *He that cometh, will come; and will not tarry*: that is, they who obey him, may depend on his assistance.

And immediately after, *the just shall live by faith*.

But he who renounces his faith, must remember also, that he renounces the blessings annexed to it. I

39. CHAP. XI. 1. 2. I should be sorry to suppose, that any of you, my brethren, are of that number. Let me rather suppose you among those, who consider your faith as the only ground of your salvation. Faith is still

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1. There is little doubt, I think, but the *faith* here meant, is that *faith in the promises of a Messiah*, which strongly possessed all the serious part of mankind, in the early ages of the world. Through this faith we suppose Abel offered his sacrifice to God. Noah, who was a type of Christ, could not be ignorant, one should suppose, of what he himself represented. Abraham, to whom the promise of a Redeemer was renewed, most probably had a clear idea, in all his typical transactions, of the nature of that promise. The patriarchs too acted under the same impression; and Moses shewed, in all his actions, that the *reproach of Christ was greater riches to him, than the treasures of Egypt*. Under the influence of this promise also all the worthies of Israel acted—their judges administered justice—their heroes fought—their martyrs died—and their prophets predicted future events.—On a supposition also of this general faith in the promises of God, (which, no doubt, were more or less clear to different persons,) we account for several crimes in the bible-history, which cannot well be accounted for on any other supposition: at least, we cannot account for Moses's mentioning several of them, unless with a view to shew how strongly the promise of a Saviour wrought in the early ages of the world. We follow the clue, which St. Paul has given us; who mentions some of the judges of Israel, as acting under the influence of this faith, tho they were certainly guilty of very unwarrantable actions.—On the birth of Cain, Eve declared, *she had gotten a man from the Lord*; supposing most probably that Cain was the promised Saviour. Cain, adopting, as is also probable, his mother's opinion, and finding Abel more favoured

what it always has been, through the whole history of your forefathers. It may be called the realizing of our hopes, as nothing can be the object of our hopes, which has not first been the object of our faith. It may be called also the evidence of such things, as our knowledge cannot reach. Through faith we are assured, that the works of creation were formed by the word of God. It was faith in the promises of God, that gave a value to the sacrifice of Abel; and made it an example to future times. Cain's, being not of the expiatory kind, was not founded in faith. It was the same faith, that carried Enoch to heaven without his suffering the pains of

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favoured by God than *he* was, might ground his jealousy against his brother, on this circumstance.—To a jealousy of the same kind we may refer the enmity between Jacob, and Esau: and the machinations of Joseph's brethren; who might think him, as the child of Rachel, and their father's favourite, the promised seed.—To this desire also of giving birth to the promised seed, we may refer several of the accounts of polygamy, and concubinage, which we meet with in the bible-history. Abraham's intercourse with Hagar was plainly of this kind. Even the story of Lot's daughters may be referred to this source. As far as appears (see Gen. xix. 8) they were virtuous women: but being now shut out from all mankind; and being utterly deprived of the great hope, which possessed all the women of those days, who believed in the promises of God, they were led into this abominable action. It appears evidently from the face of the story, that they had no wish, but that of having offspring: and that they rather gloried in what they had done, seems plain from the names they gave their children, which signify the mode of their birth.

4. Abel's sacrifice was a bloody one (see Gen. iv. 4) and therefore of the *expiatory kind*. Cain's was only of the fruits of the earth; for which God reproves him; and points out to him what he ought to have done. *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, a SIN-OFFERING* (for so it should be translated) *lieth at the door.* Gen. iv. 7.

mortality.

6. mortality. He pleased God: and we know there is
 7. no other way of pleasing him, but by a steady, and
 active faith in his providence, and promises. It was
 faith, that saved Noah, and his family in the ark;
 and infidelity that destroyed the rest of mankind.
 8. 9. It was faith, which carried Abraham into an un-
 known country, where he dwelt with his posterity;
 10. resting on the general promise of God for a better
 11. inheritance. Through faith also Sarah, in her old
 12. age, bore a son; from which child of faith sprang
 13. the whole people of Israel.—All the eminent pa-
 triarchs died before the completion of the promises,
 they had received: but having full faith in them,
 they considered themselves, in this world, only as
 14. 15. on a journey; passing to their heavenly home. For
 if they had regarded only temporal things, their
 prospects lay fairer in the country they had left.
 16. But it is plain they had better hopes. Therefore
 God professed himself to be their protector; and
 prepared for them a mansion of future happiness.
 17. 18. By faith Abraham offered Isaac; tho in him he
 expected a completion of all the promises, which
 19. God had made him. But as, at first, he had mira-
 culously received a son; he concluded, that God
 could as easily after death raise him again to life.
 20. Through faith in the promises of God, Isaac blessed

14. Πατρίδα ἐκζητοῦσι, says the original; which we translate coldly, *They seek a country*. But πατρίς signifies, not a country; but our native country—the place where our ancestors have lived.

Jacob, and Esau: and afterwards Jacob, when he was dying in Egypt, blessed the two sons of Joseph. Joseph also, on his death-bed, predicted the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt; and in testimony of his faith, ordered his own bones to be carried into the land of Canaan.—The extraordinary preservation of Moses was owing to an act of faith in his parents: the promises of God weighed more with them, than the threatnings of the king. Through the same principle also Moses himself, when he came to years of discretion, renounced all connections with the court of Pharaoh; and chose rather to partake of the afflictions of his own people, than to enjoy the pleasures of a sinful life. He had full trust in the promises of God; and preferred the hard duties, to which they led him, before all the softness, and luxury of Egypt. His faith carried him forward to an expected Messiah; and in this confidence he conducted the Israelites out of Egypt, and despised the wrath of Pharaoh. Through faith he kept the first passover; and through the sprinkling of blood, averted the destroying angel from his people: and lastly, through faith he passed the red sea; while the Egyptians pursuing him, were destroyed.

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21. *Leaning on the top of his staff.* Thus it is rendered in the septuagint; from which the sacred writers commonly quote; but in the Hebrew, it is *bowed*, or *leaned on his bed*; which considering the patriarch was then dying, seems to be the better sense.

26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ*; that is, the reproaches, to which a belief in the Messiah led him.

30. —In the sequel of the Israelitish history, Joshua
 31. was enabled to throw down the walls of Jericho
 32. 33. 34. through faith—by which also Rahab was saved in
 35. 36. 37. the midst of a general massacre.—But it would be
 38. endless to enumerate all the champions, and all the
 prophets, and martyrs of the bible-history; and enter
 39. into all their actions, and sufferings, through this
 40. great virtue.—Thus faith hath been the leading
 principle from the earliest times to these: and tho
we have seen the completion of those promises,
 which *they* only saw at a distance; yet God hath left
 sufficient room for the exercise of our faith also in
 the duties of our more perfect covenant; that we
 might partake with them in the same blessed reward
 of faith and holiness.

CHAP XII.

1. 2.

Under the influence then of such numerous exam-
 ples in the exercise of this great virtue, let us lay
 aside every incumbrance, and run with patience our
 Christian course; setting chiefly before us, as the
 point to aim at, the example of our blessed Lord,
 who through a life of sorrow, and distress, entered
 3. eternal glory. When you feel yourselves therefore
 fainting in this great conflict, renew your endeavours

37. *Ἐννοπαῖς θανάτου, were tempted.* The meaning is commonly
 supposed to be, *they were tempted to renounce their faith by threaten-*
ings. Some reject the expression entirely as it is not found in
 several MSS; while others again suppose the right reading was
ἐννοπαῖς θανάτου, they were burnt alive.

Chap. XII. The beginning of this chapter should be read,
 and studied by all, who are in affliction.

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by considering what accumulated misery your great Leader underwent for your sakes.—Besides, your sufferings have yet been light, compared with those of such holy men, as have offered up their lives for religion. Your sufferings have yet only been chastisements for sin. Have you forgotten the exhortations of scripture, which speak to all suffering sinners: *My son, take patiently the chastening of the Lord; and let it urge you to serve him with greater diligence: for the correction of the Lord is an instance of his love?* By chastising you, therefore, God shews himself your father. It is a fatherly duty. To be without chastisement, would argue you not to be under the discipline of a father. And if we respect an earthly father for his attention to his children; much more ought we to reverence our heavenly father, who does not, as the earthly father, correct us on worldly motives; but for the benefit of our immortal souls. For the present, no doubt, every degree of correction is painful: but happy is he, who can consider it as an exercise of his virtue. Lift up therefore your feeble hands, and bend your stiffened knees; and amend your faults under the correcting hand of your heavenly father. Live peaceably with men; and piously with God; and you shall be inheritors of God's holy kingdom. But take care, that you renounce not, in any degree, the faith you

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5. Prov. iii. 11, 12.

VOL. II.

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have

16. 17. have received. Take care not to mix the doctrines of the world with the truths of religion. Remember the case of Esau, who for a morsel of food sold his birth-right. He found it impossible to recover that privilege, after he had once lost it : and it is justly to be apprehended, that all apostates may bring themselves into the same dreadful circumstances.—
18. 19. 20. 21. Much more guilty would the Christian apostate be, than the Jewish. The law of Moses was given with all those circumstances of terrific grandeur, which struck it's observers with fear. Even Moses himself was terrified with the awful appearance of that wonderful transaction. Whereas you, instead of trembling at the bottom of a mountain, flaming with fire from heaven, are admitted, (if you comply with the conditions of the gospel,) to the blessed society of heaven, consisting of saints, and angels—even to the presence of God himself—and to Jesus, the mediator of this blessed covenant ; whose blood did not cry,
22. 23.
- 24.

17. *And found no place of repentance*—meaning his father Isaac's repentance, or change of mind. See a note on Matt. iii. 2.

18. *The mount that might be touched.* I cannot find there are any copies, authorizing that reading, which, one should suppose, the sense requires—*The mount that might not be touched.* If we take the expression, as we read it, we must consider it as barely expressing an *earthly mount*—a mount that was the *object of our senses*—that *might be touched*—in opposition to the heavenly one.

21. It is supposed, that St. Paul alludes in this passage about Moses to the LXX translation of Deut. ix. 19. *ἐκφοβός ἐμμαι διὰ τοῦ θυμοῦ.*

24. The apostle probably alludes to Gen. iv. 10. *Thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground.*

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like that of Abel, for vengeance; but called down mercy.

Take care therefore that you reject not so gracious a call: for if they who apostatized from the Mosaic law—a law delivered only by the mediation of man, were punished with death; what punishment do they deserve, who reject the evidence of the Son of God from heaven? That voice, which at first shook the earth, at the giving of the law, we are assured by the prophet, shall once more shake, not the earth only; but heaven itself: that is, the law, which was but a temporary institution, is now fulfilled in the gospel, which adds heaven to the scheme.—There is something farther observable in this prophecy. The expression *once more* indicates a change; and that the former institution should be superseded by the latter. —We have now therefore an institution, which fully enables us to pay that true worship to God, which he expects; but at the same time we must remember, that in proportion to the greatness of the advantage, a penalty is annexed to our disobedience.

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I shall conclude my epistle with inculcating a few practical duties.—Among these, let charity take the lead. Make no distinction between Jew, and

CHAP.
XIII.

I.

26. Alluding to Haggai ii. 6, 7.

2. Gentile converts. As there is often a resort of strangers among you, be ready to shew your hospitality to all. The patriarchs often entertained angels : you may often entertain saints.—Forget not those, who are in a state of suffering for the gospel; whether they are in bonds; or in any other affliction; remembering, that, in these times, you are all liable to the same trials.—Marriage is an honourable state; but every other connection between the sexes is absolutely forbidden.—Be moderate in all your desires, and satisfied with what you have; trusting in God's promise to provide for you, and protect you.—Remember with affection, and zeal the instruction, and holy example of those first professors of the Christian faith, who have gone before you; and laid down their lives for it's sake: and keep always in memory the great end, which inspired them—the everlasting promises of our blessed Lord: and let these promises keep you steady in your faith, and in the grace of God; which you will find more productive of happiness, than the ceremonies of the law

2. *Some have entertained angels unawares.* This is rather intended as an *encomium* on hospitality, than as a *motive* to it.—The Indian Bramins turn this sentiment into a *motive*; instructing their disciples, that superior beings often descend in likeness of ordinary travellers, and reward such as shew kindness to them.

7. It is rather supposed, that St. Paul, in this passage, alludes to their dead, than living pastors: and that the present tense stands for the imperfect. He mentions their living pastors, ver. 17. See Pyle, Doddridge, &c.

ever

ever were. The Jew indeed, while he continues such, cannot partake of the Christian altar. By his own law he cannot. The bodies of those beasts, which were sacrificed for the expiation of sin, were carried without the camp, and burnt; but never eaten. As Christ fulfilled that type, he was put to death without the city. Of his body therefore the Jew, while he continues such, cannot partake. But let us Christians follow him without the gate; bearing patiently every reproach, which the Jew can lay upon us; not considering this earthly Jerusalem, but heaven, as our home.—Through Christ then let us offer up our praises, and thanksgivings to God; always remembering, that the best sacrifice is a holy life.—Pay all proper respect to your spiritual pastors, who watch over you. God grant they may give an account of their ministry among you with joy! Their sorrow will certainly bespeak your unprofitableness under their instruction.—Let us be the subject of your constant prayers; particularly that we may soon be delivered from our enemies. However ill-treated we are, I hope our preaching, and conversation, have ever been sincere and inoffensive.

May the God of peace, who raised up Christ from the dead, accepting his blood as an atonement for sin, assist you in living obediently to his will, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom be glory, and honour, for ever, and ever, Amen!

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11. See Levit. xvi. 27.

22. I hope you will receive the exhortation of this
short letter with that kindness, with which it is
23. written: and as Timothy is now at liberty, I shall
be able soon to accompany him in a visit to you.
24. Salute all the elders of the church in our name;
and accept the salutation of all the brethren in Italy.
25. Grace be with you all. Amen!

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE
HEBREWS.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE of St. JAMES.

THIS epistle stands foremost of the seven epistles, which are called *catholicæ*, from their addressing no particular church, but the whole body of believers; tho one, or two of them are addressed to particular persons. — It was written by James, the son of Alphaeus, sometimes called James the less; or James the just. He is supposed also to have been the first bishop of Jerusalem, and is mentioned in scripture as our *Lord's brother*; which probably means only a near relation. The other James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, suffered martyrdom very early in the Christian æra*.

In this epistle, the apostle first encourages his Christian readers to bear with patience the trials they should meet with; and consider them as sent from God; and improve them to the purposes of religion. He presses upon his readers meekness, and gentleness to each other, as the test of their sincerity; and highly blames all partiality of

* See Acts xii. 2.

behaviour between man and man, as wholly inconsistent with Christian charity. He shews that faith itself, without charity, is of no avail—and inforces his doctrine by several examples. He dwells next on the government of the tongue: and in the beginning of the IVth chapter, addresses himself, as is generally supposed, to the *unbelieving Jews*. But, at the eleventh verse of the same chapter, returning again to his Christian readers, he taxes them with too much worldly mindedness; and strictly enjoins them, as he began, to be patient, and forbearing under persecution. He then mentions the practice of swearing (to which from Jewish custom, they were probably much addicted) and strictly forbids it: concluding with an earnest exhortation to endeavour to draw sinners to repentance.

The authenticity of this interesting part of the sacred canon seems never to have been questioned in early times. Indeed it could not; for it is found in the Syriac version; which is supposed to have been made as early as the beginning of the second century. But it is very remarkable, that Luther took offence at it; and wished to exclude it from the other scriptures. The apostle's idea of justification, it is imagined, was the stumbling-block. It is said however by Wolfius, and others, that Luther lived to change his opinion.

GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

S T. J A M E S.

CHAP.

I.

JAMES, a servant of God, and Christ, to all Jewish Christians, wherever dispersed—greeting!

Consider it, my brethren, as matter rather of joy, than of grief, that you are exercised with various trials; as by these you learn submission to the divine will. When your hearts are truly formed by this holy exercise, you have attained the perfection of religion. Through human power indeed this holy temper is not to be attained. It is fervent prayer to God, that will draw his assistance on the pious endeavours of his servants. But your prayers must

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1. The twelve tribes still existed, at least in foreign parts, as may be learned from Josephus, and others; tho we read only of two, who returned *in form from* captivity. See Lardner's Cred. p. I. chap. III.

- be founded in faith. The unsteady Christian must never expect his petitions to reach the throne of God. Our holy religion furnishes proper consolation to every station of life. Are we in a low condition?
9. Let us consider to what a heavenly state we are exalted. Are we reduced from better circumstances? God hath providentially removed us from a multitude of temptations, which might have oppressed us; and has, at worst, only taken from us, what in course we must presently give up. Bear the trials then of this world with pious resignation; and look forward to that reward, which awaits your perseverance.
10. 11.
- 12.
13. Nor let any man pretend to excuse himself by saying, God threw temptations in his way. It is impious to suppose, that a pure Being can be the author of sin. Every man's sins are certainly on his own head. He suffers his lusts to intice him. Hence sin is produced; hence death came into the world; and hence man's lost condition. Do not then, my brethren, fall into so pernicious an error; but consider God, unchangeable in his nature, as the author only of good. Through his free grace he created us. Through his free grace he hath redeemed us. Under a sense therefore of God's goodness to *us*, let us behave kindly to *each other*. Let us be humble-minded—open to conviction—
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13. God's being the author of evil, has been an apology for wickedness, we see, ever since the establishment of Christianity.

and particularly careful not to mix heat, and animosity with our religious differences. The passionate advocate never advances the cause of religion. Lay aside therefore every degree of bitterness. That holy gospel, which is to save your souls, can be received only in the spirit of meekness. Remember, that religion does not consist in hearing the truth; but in practising it. Every thing else is self-deceit. The gospel is the great rule of life, and manners; and he, who does not use it as such, is like a man, who looks merely in a glass for curiosity; but leaves it instantly, without examining what defects in his appearance he should rectify. He only can receive any advantage from the gospel, who examines it so as to govern himself by it's precepts. Nor must he consider his religion as sincere; if it lead him into uncharitable and bitter language, instead of those benevolent actions, and that heavenly conversation, in which religion so much consists.

Besides the animosities, which I fear may prevail among you, I must take notice of another thing, which is exceedingly wrong; and that is your partiality to people in higher stations. If dress influence you on one hand; or mean apparel, on the other; you

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CHAP.
II.

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4. It is not easy to say, in what manner the apostle supposes this partiality to have wrought: but it is probable he means in their *judicial decisions*. The word *synagogue*, in the original, (ver. 2) rather means *a court of justice*, than an assembly met to worship God. Impartiality is the characteristic of the one, and devotion

5. you certainly guide your decisions by a very unchristian rule. Consider, my brethren, how your almighty Father acts. Doth he make any difference between the poor, and the rich? Are they not all equal heirs of his promises? Yet these poor you have despised; notwithstanding the rich are they, who chiefly oppress you—and profane that holy
6. Name, which you revere. That most excellent rule of your religion, to *love your neighbour as yourself*, teaches you a different practice; and strongly opposes
7. all this unjust partiality. For there is such a connection between all the duties of religion; that he who
8. lives in the known breach of one, would break any of the rest, if he were under the same temptation.
9. The general precept of loving our neighbour, equally
10. enjoins every duty to him. He therefore who is guilty of one offence against his neighbour, would as readily be guilty of another. But let me hope, that
11. you regulate your actions, not by Jewish prejudices, which make exceptions to persons; but by that equal law of Christianity, which prescribes universal
12. love. The unmerciful, and malicious man, you
- 13.

devotion of the other. The Talmudists expressly say, that if a poor man, and a rich man plead together, they must both either sit, or stand. Beza says, that the expression, which we translate, *judges of evil thoughts*, is a Hebraism; and therefore he translates it, *judices, male ratiocinantes—judges who reason ill.*

11. Some translate *it, he*; and refer it to the *lawgiver*. Others translate it *it*; and refer it to the *royal law*. Both senses are good. The latter is well explained by Bp. Sherlock in the 13th sermon of his first volume.

know,

know, by the whole tenor of the gospel, is laying up for himself future mischief: while mercy to man, will certainly meet a return of mercy from God.

Nay farther, be assured, that without works of charity, even the great Christian principle of faith is of no avail. Can faith alone, do you suppose, save you? See how it appears in common life. A person in distress presents himself to you. You tell him you are fully convinced of his unhappy condition; and heartily wish him relief. But if your belief of his distress carry you no farther than good wishes, is it of any advantage to him? Just in the same way, faith, unaccompanied by good works, signifies nothing. And it is an undoubted truth, that there is no way of shewing the soundness of your faith, but by the purity of your lives.—Nor is this any new doctrine. Faith, under the Jewish religion, had just the same tendency, as under the Christian. If the Jew merely believed in God, he did no more, than the devils do; who believe and tremble. Such a faith, unaccompanied by works, was dead. Was not Abraham's faith evidenced by works, when he offered up Isaac on the altar? Was it not this mode of faith, which shewed his sincerity? Was it not through this, he was justified? And was it

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23. Gen. xv. 6. 2 Chron. xx. 7. Isa. xli. 8.

23. It is remarkable, that St. Paul quotes this very text (Romans iv. 3.) to prove that Abraham was *justified by faith*: which St. James produces to shew, *that he was justified by works, and not by faith only.*

24. not this, which gained him the honourable title of
 25. the Friend of God? You see then that by works
 a man is justified; and not by faith only.—The
 case of Rahab was the same. If she had professed
 her faith only in God, it had been nothing: but
 she shewed the sincerity of it by her works—by re-
 26. ceiving, and dismissing the spies. Thus as the body
 without the soul is dead; so the Jewish faith for-
 merly, and the Christian faith now, are dead also;
 unless actuated by that invivifying spirit, which draws
 faith into action.

CHAP.
III.

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If then the profession of faith alone, be not sufficient
 to make a Christian, you may be assured, it is much
 less so, to make a teacher. Let a man be careful
 therefore in taking upon himself this office, By
 misleading others he contracts double guilt. We
 have

25. This is the third time, in which *Rahab the harlot* is men-
 tioned in the New Testament. The reason why she is thus par-
 ticularized (for the apostle might have found many other instances
 of faith,) may be first to shew the eminence of *her faith*, which
 distinguished itself in believing in the true God, amidst a nation
 of idolaters. Secondly, because David, as is commonly under-
 stood, was descended from her, and afterwards Christ.—Many
 interpreters however do not allow that she ought to be stigmatized
 by the name of *harlot*; but find the word, which is so translated,
 may mean a person *who took hire for the entertainment of guests at her*
house. The Jewish spies therefore applied to her merely for
 lodging.

1. The Jewish zealots greatly affected the office of teachers
 —St. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. i. 7.) rebukes
 these forward teachers: and again, in Romans (ii. 19). St.
 James uses the same language here.

2. The word *πλάνη* properly signifies *we trip*. The general
 course of our life, says Dr. Barrow, is called in scripture *a way*
 the

have all our failings; but the religious Christian is so far from abusing the use of speech by indiscrete teaching, that he is careful even in his common conversation. A strict care over his words, he knows, is one of the best preservatives against sin. He, who can govern his tongue, may be said to govern his life; just as the bit guides the horse; and the helm, the ship. Tho the tongue is a small instrument, it's power is great. How mischievous a flame is often raised by a spark? Such a spark is the tongue. It is kindled in hell; and sets fire to the world. Full of deadly poison, it is more pernicious than serpents—more furious, than the fiercest wild beast. How shocking is it to consider, that that tongue, which was given us to bless God, is employed in cursing our fellow-creatures. Such contradictions appear in no part of the creation, but in man. We never see the fountain produce sweet water, and bitter; nor the tree bear different kinds of fruit. Whoever therefore among you, pretends to real wisdom, let him shew it in a restrained, gen-

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the particular passages of it, *steps*: a regular course of right acting, *walking uprightly*: and when we act amiss, (*πλαιομεν*) *we trip*.

6. The tongue, says the text, is *ο κοσμος της ανομιας*; which we translate, *a world of iniquity*. Elsner (in loc.) gives this expression, a singular, and ingenious turn; the tongue, says he, *is the adorning of unrighteousness*: alluding to the many glosses, and excuses it is apt to make for wickedness. But I think, this interpretation more ingenious, than just.

7. *Δαμασεται* might more properly be rendered *subdued*, than *tamed*. All kinds of animals have certainly been subdued by man; but cannot well be said to have been *tamed*, or *reclaimed*.

tle,

14. tle, and holy conversation; assuring himself, that
 15. where strife, and emulation prevail, there may be
 16. boasting of wisdom; but it is certainly of that kind,
 17. which springs from worldly, and sensual motives;
 its fruit is mischief, and confusion. Whereas heavenly wisdom is pure, and gentle, and open to conviction; and leads to all that holiness, which possesses the mind of every peaceable man.

CHAP.
IV.

1. And here, my brethren, let me remind you of
 2. that calamitous state, to which your nation is now
 3. reduced by your seditions, and quarrels. Those bad
 4. passions, which mislead your tongues, mislead also
 5. your actions. Your whole lives are given up to
 6. temporal views; which lead you to violence, and
 mischief: and tho you still preserve an outward form
 of worship; yet your petitions being wholly void of
 true devotion, are unacceptable to God. You
 apostates from the truth! know you not that he,
 who is the friend of the world, is the enemy of God?
 In vain you search the scriptures. The Spirit of
 truth can never dwell in envious hearts. The grace
 of

2. Bowyer conjectures, that *φονεῖτε* should be read *φθονεῖτε*; *you envy*.

3. *Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it on your lusts.* A man ought well to consider, (says Plato) when he prays, lest he deceive himself; and ask for evil, when he expects good. See Alcib. II. sub fin.

6. This epistle is supposed to have been written about the year sixty-two; when the wild, and frantic madness of the Jews, in various places, was drawing upon them apace those dreadful calamities, which soon overwhelmed them. This part of the epistle

of God resists the proud; but flows in full measure upon the humble.—Lay aside then all worldly-mindedness: resist the devil: turn truly to God: humble yourselves before him: wash away your sins by repentance: and God will open to you the gates of mercy. 7. 8. 9. 10.

And now, my brethren in Christ, let me next address myself to *you*. Tho you have accepted the grace of God; yet be not harsh in condemning those, who are not so happy. This is making yourselves judges of God's laws; instead of being humble observers of them. Do you pretend to issue that sentence, which can come only from the great Lawgiver himself? Look nearer home. I find even among *you* too much of this worldly spirit. You depend, in your worldly schemes, too much on yourselves, and on your own prudence, not considering the uncertainty of all human things; which points out to you the necessity of depending on God. This is a kind of confidence, my brethren, which springs from an evil root: and in you, who know better, it is certainly so much worse. You will soon be spectators of that misery, and distress, which is coming upon the powerful leaders of the Jews. What will be the end of all their wealth? They have hoarded it up as 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17.

CHAP.
V.
1. 2. 3.

epistle therefore, of course, must be considered as addressed to the unbelieving part of the Jewish nation.

11. The resuming the address here to *christians* is not directly specified, yet it seems to be understood; and so it is interpreted by the best commentators.

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4. an increase of their distress at this time. Their
 5. frauds, and injustice will then rise against them. The
 6. cry of their iniquities will reach to heaven; and of
 those pleasurable lives, which have been spent as in a
 heathen riot on a day of sacrifice. But, above all,
 for their having put to death the Messiah, are they
 chiefly punished with this dreadful calamity.
7. Be you however, my brethren, (persecuted and
 distressed as you are,) patient, and resigned; waiting
 for that happy time, which will finish all your afflic-
 tions. See with what labour the husbandman toils
 8. through the year, in expectation of his harvest. And
 shall not you live in patient hope of that happiness

3. The *last days* is often an evangelical expression to denote the dissolution of the Jewish government, on the establishment of christianity.

5. Some interpreters suppose the apostle here means their surfeiting themselves with pleasure, as beasts were fatted for sacrifice.

6. 7. The address likewise in this chapter seems to be made to two different sorts of people—hardened Jews—and Jewish converts. In the 6th verse they seem to be taxed with the death of Christ—in the 7th they are addressed as persons, who ought to be patient unto the coming of the Lord.—The expression, *And he doth not resist you*, is commonly understood interrogatively; and may therefore be rendered, as I have explained it.—Some however are inclined to believe, from the internal evidence of this epistle, that it was addressed only to those Jews, who professed christianity. Had the apostle written to unbelieving Jews, say they, he would have endeavoured, one should think, to persuade them to embrace the christian faith. He would have testified the resurrection of Christ; and brought arguments from the prophets to convince them that he was the Messiah. But nothing of this appears. His design therefore seems only to build up those in the christian practice, who had already embraced the christian faith.—I leave these arguments to the reader's judgment.

which

which is to last through all eternity? Strengthen your faith then with this great view of the glory of God. Lay aside all resentment against your persecutors (which in every light is irreligious) and leave them in the hands of almighty justice. Take the prophets as examples of suffering. Read the account of that holy sufferer Job. There see the goodness of the Lord in all the distresses of his patient servants; and how graciously he reaches out his hand to sustain them.—As I exhort you thus to lay aside all persecuting thoughts, let me exhort you also to lay aside that common Jewish practice of swearing. Swearing in common conversation, either by God, or any of his creatures, is utterly forbidden by Christianity.

Finally, my brethren, turn every circumstance of life to your spiritual advantage. Are any in distress?

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15. The persons here mentioned are such as (1 Cor. xi. 30) had drawn upon themselves God's displeasure for their sins. These were visitations known in the early ages of the church. We read, that death, in some cases, was inflicted; and St. Paul sometimes threatens his back-sliding converts; that he will *visit them with a rod*.—Such cases however must not be drawn into modern example. The elders of the church may still, and ought still to pray with sick people: but we have no authority to suppose the prayer of faith will restore them to health.—I know no greater source of fanaticism, than the application of apostolic powers to modern times.—As to the *anointing with oil* here mentioned, it was certainly practised in the ancient church. We read of it again in Mark (vi. 13). But the stress is not laid on the *oil*; but on the *prayer of faith*. Our Saviour in many of his miracles, used *external signs*; and for the same reason *anointing* might be used, which was customary among the Jews. Be it however as it may, there is a great difference between anointing a sick person, in order to *his recovery*; and anointing him professedly

- distress? Let them pray to God. Are they happy? Let them praise him. Are they under God's correcting hand for their sins? Let them send for the elders of the church, who receiving their confession, and resolutions of obedience, will pray over them: and the prayers of the faithful shall raise them again to health; and their sins shall be forgiven. Prayer is our most effectual intercourse with God. On the prayers of Elijah, who was a
 17. mere

fessedly *when he is dying*, as a mean of sanctification. See a note on Mark vi. 13.—It may be added, that anointing with oil, and using certain muttering words, was a sort of charm among the Jews. To this custom St. James *may* allude; as if he had said, How much better is it, instead of those incantations, which are often used, to use *the prayer of faith*. See Lightfoot's Heb. and Talm. Exer. v. II. p. 162.

16. *The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* This passage the papist thinks very authoritative with regard to the worship of saints. He argues, a fortiori, that if the prayers of a good man avail much; the prayers of a saint, or an angel, must avail more.—But he ought to consider, that altho the prayers, and intercessions of a *good man* are allowed, and indeed enjoined; all prayers to angels are totally forbidden (see Col. ii. 18.) and the reason is obvious; we cannot pray to a saint, or angel, without ascribing to him the prerogative of God, in hearing our prayers, which in fact, makes an act of prayer an act of idolatry. We request *the prayers of men* on no such reasons. We do not pray to men; but for them. God may have enjoined prayer for our fellow-creatures for our own sakes. It certainly tends greatly to meliorate the heart; and, in the apostle's language, to *provoke unto love, and good works*. Heb. x. 24.—*Effectual* prayer *availeth much*, as in our translation, is a contradiction. *Eneyque* means rather *energetic*.

17. The case of Elijah, here alluded to, seems to be this. He feared, from God's threatnings against idolatry, that the whole land should be destroyed; and therefore he prayed for a drought in order to bring the people to repentance by a slighter punishment.

mere man like us, the heavens were shut up; and rain fell not for more than three years. On his praying again, the rains fell; and the earth produced fruit. Among all the works of charity, that of saving a soul from death; and covering up, as it were, the iniquities of a sinner, is the most pleasing to God.

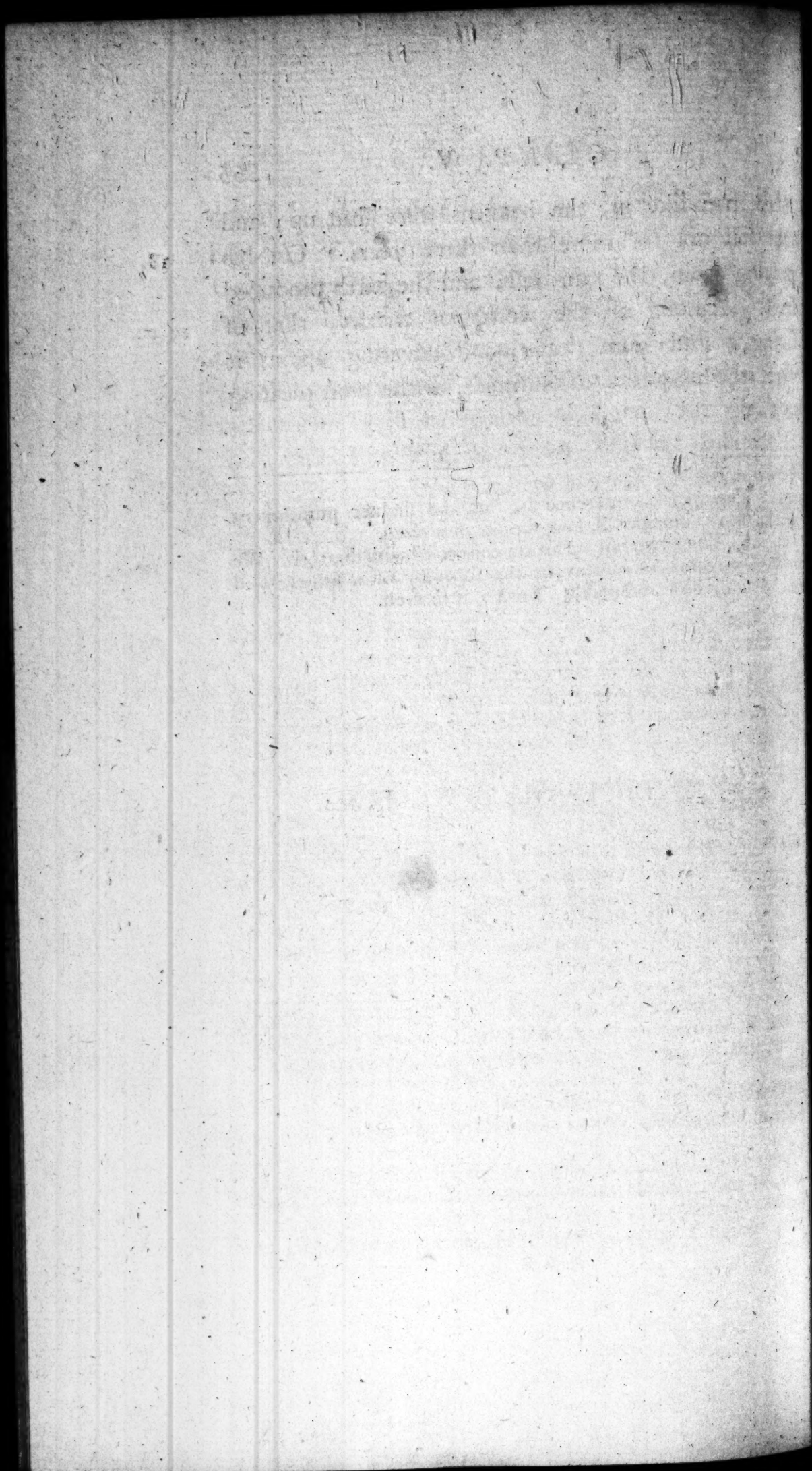
18.

19. 20.

ment. The apostle's inference is, that the slighter punishment of sickness was intended to save the *soul from death*.

19. 20. These two last verses are connected with the 16th. We are there directed to endeavour the recovery of a sinner; and here we find, how acceptable a work it is to God.

END OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.



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P R E F A C E

P R E F A C E

TO THE

FIRST, AND SECOND

EPISTLES OF ST. PETER.

ST. PETER is supposed to have lived chiefly in Judea; tho he carried the gospel into several parts of Greece. He visited Rome also, where he is said to have suffered martyrdom under the emperor Nero. From hence both his epistles seem to have been written, a little before his death; to which he alludes, as an event at hand*. They may be considered therefore as an affectionate legacy; and were, no doubt, considered as such by the converts, to whom they were addressed; tho some doubt hath arisen, who these converts were. Many interpreters have conceived his epistles to have been written to Jewish Christians: others again have thought they were written only to Gentiles. Dr. Lardner hath examined both sides with great accuracy; and concludes, they were written to *all* Christian converts; but *chiefly* addressed to those of Gentile extraction.

* II. Pet. i. 14.

In his first epistle St. Peter exhorts his Christian readers to persevere in their religious principles on various motives. He inculcates universal love—purity of life—obedience to government—the observance of relative duties—and Christian gentleness in all situations, even in that of suffering. He lastly addresses the ministers of the gospel; and concludes with some general instructions.

The second epistle begins as the first, with exhortations to perseverance in holiness. The apostle then warns his hearers against false prophets, and deceivers—reminds them of God's judgments; and concludes with exhortations to true religion from a view of eternity.

FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE

O F

S T. P E T E R.

CHAP.
I.

i. 2.

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to all the
Christian converts, scattered through different
parts

2. *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God.* On this passage the doctrine of predestination to future happiness, greatly depends. But, I think, it receives little support from it. As we find that all the Christians of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, &c. are the *elect*, nothing can be more absurd than to suppose so large a body of people were all in a state of salvation. Nothing can be collected from the passage, but that the Gentiles were pointed out by *prophecy*, or the *foreknowledge of God*, to be ingrafted into the Christian church. St. Peter's whole language, both in this, and the following epistle, shews, he did not consider these converts to be in a state of absolute grace. His language all along *implies*, what he *says in direct words* in the next epistle (i. 10.) *Give diligence to make your calling, and election sure.* If it were already *sure*, what occasion for *giving any farther diligence*?—I shall only add, that in the opening verses of this epistle is contained a sketch (complete, as far as it goes) of the whole economy of our redemption. It is the *free gift of God the Father*. We are led to obedience *through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit*: and are finally

parts of Asia, (who having embraced that gospel, which God had originally promised, lead lives answerable to it, through the sanctification of the Spirit; and hope for salvation through the death of Christ) —grace and peace be multiplied unto you!

3. 4. 5. Blessed be God evermore, who hath raised us, by the resurrection of Christ, to the hope of an eternal inheritance; which is reserved for us, if we persevere in our faith. This hope ought to be the source of all your happiness; tho it may, during this life, engage you in trials, and afflictions. These, as a furnace tries gold, will purify your faith more and more; and draw you to Christ. And tho you were never blessed with the sight of your Saviour, as many of your fellow-christians have been; yet you have evidence sufficient to believe on him—and to rejoice in the hope of that salvation, which is the end of your faith. The evidence indeed of all the holy prophets is sufficient; who, through the Spirit of God, foresaw these things; and testified of the sufferings of

justified by the blood of Christ. This doctrine is every where scattered through the scriptures; but I know not, that it is any where brought together, in one view, so compleatly as it is here.

5. *Kept through faith*, says our translation: but the original (*δια πίστεως*) may rather perhaps signify, *during faith*. The preposition *δια* has various significations; and, I believe, among others, may admit this. As *δια νόμου* during the time of the law. Rom. iv. 13. *Δια τῶ σώματος* during our abode in the body. 2 Cor v. 10. The original word *φρουρούμενοι* is very strong; as if the faithful in Christ were preserved, as in an impregnable garison.

11. The Spirit which inspired the prophets, is here called the Spirit of Christ.

Christ,

Christ, and of his glorious state, that should follow. Their testimony agreed, that this great revelation should not take place in their days: they only predicted, what should afterwards be preached under the influence of the Holy Spirit—that great dispensation of God, which even the angels examine with astonishment.

12.

Let these thoughts therefore keep you firm in your profession; and in the holy expectation of the last great day. Utterly detesting those abominable impurities, in which you once lived, become now the obedient children of God: and let his purity be your pattern, as you are directed in scripture. You are assured, that God is no respecter of persons; but judgeth every man according to his work. Live therefore in a constant course of watchfulness, and apprehension of danger.

13.

14. 15. 16.

17.

As an inducement to you to add your own utmost endeavours to God's kindness, consider how precious your souls are in his sight. You have been redeemed, not with the corruptible things of this world, silver, and gold; but with the blood of Christ. And this redemption was pre-ordained from the foundation of the world; tho it is opened only to us at this time. Let it therefore excite in you a trust in that God, who by raising up Christ from the

18. 19.

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21.

12. The angels desiring to look into the mysteries of Christianity hath been thought by some to be an allusion to the posture of the cherubims over the mercy-seat.

16. See Levit. xi. 44—xix. 2—xx. 7, 26.

dead, gave you the strongest foundation for faith and hope.

22. Since then you have given yourselves up to the profession of this holy religion, shew it in the performance of that great duty, in which it particularly

23. engages you, the universal love of mankind; considering yourselves now, not of an earthly lineage;

24. but as born of God, through Christ. Every thing human, as well as all the productions of nature, are subject to decay: but the religion of the gospel is

25.
CHAP.
II.

1. 2. 3.

as enduring for ever. As you are now therefore born anew into this holy religion, lay aside all malice, and guile, and hypocrisy, and evil-speaking; and like children fed on simple diet, receive in your hearts the pure principles of the gospel; and taste the grace of God. Let all worldly prejudices be dispelled

4. 5. Consider yourselves as forming a part of a nobler temple, than that of the Jews; and in which a much more spiritual sacrifice is offered to God through Christ.

6. This is agreeable to the prophecy of Isaiah; *Behold I lay in Sion a corner-stone; and whatever rests on it, shall be firmly established.*—Thus the Messiah is characterized to the true believer. But to the unbelieving Jew he is held out by one prophet, (tho the

7. head-stone in the corner, uniting Jew, and Gentile

25. See Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8.

6. Isa. xxviii. 16.

7. Psalm cxviii. 22.

in one building; yet) as disallowed by the builders: and by another prophet he is represented as a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to those, who being wilfully disobedient, draw upon themselves that punishment, which God hath appointed. But you, who have embraced the gospel, are considered by God as the inheritors of all those holy blessings, which were promised to the Jews. You now display more eminently the glory of God in being drawn from darkness to light, than the Jews anciently did. Tho you were before considered as a race, not deserving notice; you are now received more fully into the favour, and mercies of God, than they formerly were.

8.

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13.

Fully impressed then, my brethren, with these high ideas of the dignity of your heavenly calling, consider yourselves only as passengers through this world; and abstain from all it's guilty pleasures, which debase, and corrupt the soul. Among your Gentile neighbours let your conduct be particularly guarded. Tho they consider you now as ill-disposed people; they may begin to admire your innocent and pious behaviour; and may at length be led to serious

8. Isa. viii. 14.—The expression, *whereunto they were appointed*, is much the same, as that in Acts xiii. 48, *ordained to eternal life*. Those were appointed to destruction, because of their wickedness: and these were ordained to salvation, because of their obedience.

9. Exod. xix. 5, 6.

thoughts,

13. 14. thoughts, in some alarming day of visitation. — And to shew them that you do not wish to interfere with any of their civil rights, submit peaceably to whatever government you live under; and to every department of it. And let this be done in obedience to the will of God. This also is the most effectual way of silencing the prejudices, and ignorance of your adversaries. You are free in one sense indeed: but you must not consider your freedom, as a privilege against the rights of government; but merely in a spiritual sense. Pay therefore such respect to the several orders of men, as is due to them; shewing at the same time an affectionate regard to each other, from whatever stock you become Christians. In short, adhere firmly to your religion, and perform all the duties of good citizens.
15. In private life, let the same rules be observed. The slave, who becomes a Christian, is still a slave. His religion must enable him to submit even to an imperious master. If a man suffer patiently for an offence, he deserves little praise. But when he bears,
16. 17. 18. 19. 20.

13. Ideas had gotten abroad, that the Christian religion was a kind of manumission from all government: especially among the Jewish Christians; who added their national prejudices to these opinions.

14. *Unto governors, as unto them, that are sent by him.* Here is a plain designation of the governors of provinces, *sent by* the Roman emperors.

15. St. Peter's language is sometimes very strong. The word *φωβει*, which is here rendered *put to silence*; properly signifies *to muzzle*; which in one expressive word shews the apostle's opinion of these adversaries of Christianity.

with

with resignation to God, unjust usage, God will not fail to accept his patient sufferings. Remember always, as the pattern of your imitation, the great example of your blessed Saviour; who tho innocent himself, bore all the reproaches, and cruelty of his persecutors with holy submission to God. He bore even the punishment of the cross, for the sins of mankind. In short, you should consider yourselves as having formerly been sheep going astray; but as now brought to the fold of Christ.

21.

22. 23.

24.

25.

The same rule obtains also between man and wife. Religion makes no change in this union. If a Christian woman be married to a heathen; let her still observe the duties of her station. Her mild, and modest behaviour may perhaps bring over her unbelieving husband. But let her trust to the ornament of her mind; not of her dress. Like the holy women of old, like Sarah, and others, who lived in patriarchal times, let her behave with mild submission to her husband; and fill her station, however difficult, with meekness, and constancy.—Let the husband also treat his wife with gentleness, and kindness; and consider her, tho a heathen, as an heir of the same promise; with whom he may hereafter be able to unite in the same worship.

CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

In conclusion, my brethren, shew every degree of kindness to each other; and bless your persecutors,

8.

9.

1. *Ανευ λόγου*—without preaching—merely by her example.

however

10. 11. 12. however ill they use you. Such a disposition will change the curse of an enemy, into the blessing of God. Even in a temporal way this gentleness has it's effect. You may consider the prophet's words, as declaring the happiness both of this world, and the next. *He that loveth life, and would see good days; let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips, that they speak no guile. Let him leave off evil, and do good: let him seek peace with his utmost endeavour. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous; and his ears are open to their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

13.

14.

15.

16.

A Christian behaviour is certainly the best mean of preserving you from the evils of this world: and if you happen to fall into them; especially if you are persecuted for your religion, it is the best way of supporting yourselves under them. The Christian sufferer finds matter of joy even in his sufferings. Be not afraid then of any of the evils, which this world can bring upon you. Devote yourselves to God; and he will assist you in giving an answer to all, who demand a reason of your faith; but let that answer always be given in the spirit of meekness to man; and of reverence to God.—Under the influence of a good conscience therefore, it may be

10, 11, 12. See Pf. xxxiv. 12, &c.

19. Wicked persons are often represented by Isaiah, and other sacred writers, under the idea of prisoners. I have endeavoured, as much as I could, in this difficult passage, to give what appears to me the connection, and scope of the apostle's argument.

hoped, you will silence the accusations of your persecutors. But if it be the will of God, that you should suffer, you will have the comfort of suffering with innocence; after the example of our blessed Saviour; who laid down his life for the sins of others; and was afterwards raised, as you also shall be, to everlasting glory. That same Spirit, which warned the ancient world, in the days of Noah, to escape the threatened evil, offers salvation to you through baptism, of which the ark is a kind of type; holding out the assurance of that salvation through the resurrection of Christ; who is now ascended into heaven, and seated in infinite glory.

Learn then to suffer after the example of Christ; and let this mortified spirit lead you from all the sinful gratifications of life; and make you feel, that there is no true enjoyment, but in obedience to the will of God. Long have you Gentile Christians lived in the practices of a wicked world. It is now time to renounce them all; and to set against the reproaches of worldly men, the awful reflection, that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. The gospel was preached to you Gentiles for this reason, that however you may be judged by worldly men; your souls may be raised hereafter in

17.

18.

19. 20.

21.

22.

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2.

3.

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6.

20. Saved by water; δι' ὕδατος, carried safely through the water.

6. I find no interpretation, which, I think, reconciles this difficult passage with the context, so well as this.

the

7. 8. the day of Christ. Let this great consideration therefore sink deep within you, that the end of all things is at hand. Let it urge you to be serious, devout, and charitable. Charity covers both your own
9. sins, and the sins of others. Communicate with each
10. other the things of this world. Communicate also your spiritual gifts, as good stewards of the different
11. graces of God: and whether you expound in the church, or minister, or perform any other office, consult only the glory of God through Christ; to whom be honour and praise for ever, and ever, Amen!
12. Once more, my brethren, let me beseech you not to be disheartened by the persecutions, which await you: but rather rejoice, that as you are partakers of
13. 14. Christ's sufferings, you shall also be partakers of his glory.—In the mean time, it is as reproachable
15. for a Christian to suffer as an offender; as it is glorious for him to suffer for his religion.—Thus
16. amidst the general ruin, which is coming upon these
17. 18.

7. Some interpreters refer the end of all things, to the conclusion of the Jewish state. I think the conclusion of the Jewish state has little to do with the present argument. Tho the end of all things might not literally be at hand: yet every man's death is the end of all things to him. Our Saviour speaks the same language. Matt. xxiv. 14.

8. *Fervent charity*, says the text: *αγάπη ενεργητική* in the original; *continued, uninterrupted charity*—that embraces all mankind—and not in a desultory, but in a uniform manner. It covers the faults of others, by bearing, forbearing, and forgiving. It covers our own, through that forgiveness, which God has promised to those, who forgive others; and also because charity, being the fulfilling of the law, leads directly to a life of holiness.

wicked

wicked times, the Christian shall have his share. But his afflictions will be light, in comparison of that great overthrow, which shall destroy the Jewish nation. Let him therefore, conscious of his own innocence, and the goodness of his cause, commit himself, in all his distresses to God, his faithful preserver.

To these general instructions, let me add a particular one to the elders of the several churches; whom, with the authority of an apostle, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, I exhort to attend diligently to their respective charges, with that ready, disinterested mind, which shews them to be under no constraint. Among other things, let them avoid a haughty, imperious behaviour. Let them rather instruct their flock by an example of meekness, and piety; that when the great Shepherd shall appear, he may approve their conduct. Let the younger pay a deference to the elder. Let a general humility take place among you; for pride is one of those vices, which are most offensive to God; and humility one of those virtues, which are most pleasing in his sight.

If then you are to shew humility to man; you ought more especially to humble yourselves in the sight of God, who never rewards self-exaltation. On him throw all your cares. He is your true friend, and only support, in all your distresses.

In fine, be constantly on your guard. The wiles of the devil surround you on every side. Let your faith support you. At the same time, remember that your trials are not greater, than those of your brethren

19.

CHAP.
V.

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10. brethren in different parts of the world.—May the
God of all grace who hath opened to us an eternity
of glory, confirm your faith through your sufferings
11. for Christ; to whom be ascribed all praise, and do-
minion for ever. Amen!

12. This short letter, my brethren, intended to
strengthen you, in your profession, I send by Silas,

13. a sincere professor of the faith.—The church of
Babylon, which unites in the same faith with you,

14. unites also in this salutation.—Remember always
to exercise among each other every office of charity;
and may the peace of God reside ever among you.
Amen!

13. Most commentators suppose the apostle calls Rome by the
name of Babylon; as it cannot be imagined he could mean the
real city of that name.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE
OF PETER.

SECOND GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

ST. PETER.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

SIMON Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to all, who through the goodness of God, are partakers with us, of the blessings of the gospel—grace, and peace be multiplied, through the knowledge of God, and of his glorious promises in Jesus Christ!

This holy religion fully opens to you the means of attaining everlasting happiness; and the completion of those great promises; which, after you have purified yourselves from the corruptions of the world, will make you partakers of a divine nature.—Endeavour

3.

4.

5. 6. 7.

1. The beginning of this epistle, conveys much the same meaning, as the beginning of the first; and may be a comment upon it.

4. Not *the* divine nature, as our translation has it.

5. These verses are generally explained thus. Add to your *faith, courage* in professing it. To this add a distinct *knowledge of all*

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B b

- deavour therefore with all your care to attain these blessings of religion, adding to your faith, every virtue to God, your neighbour, and yourselves. This holy practice alone will shew the proficiency you have made in the knowledge of the gospel. He, who is deficient here, shews plainly, that he is not in a state of grace. As you are now therefore, by the goodness of God, members of this holy religion; see that you persevere in the practice of all Christian duties; which will insure you a blessed resurrection in the kingdom of Christ.—While I am with you, I cannot but remind you of these things; tho you are so well acquainted with them. I am assured, from what our blessed Lord formerly told me, that I shall soon be taken from you; and I could wish to leave on your memory, the importance of these things. Your faith in Christ, as the great Saviour of the world, does not rest on fable, and invention; but on the testimony of eye-witnesses. I am particularly enabled
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- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
12. 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
17. 18.

all it's principles. To this add temperance, or the *government of your passions*; and to temperance, patience, or *resignation in your distresses*. To patience add godliness, or the *sincere worship of God*. To godliness, *kindness to all your near connections*; and to kindness add a *general benevolence to all mankind*.—But if we examine this catalogue of graces, and virtues, it does not, I think, appear, that they run in any regular series. The duties to God, and man, are intermixed without any attention to exact order.—All I mean to infer, is, that the sacred writers neglect the logical forms of human composition—and that the apostle just marked those virtues, which we ought most to aspire after; but did not mean a regular dependent series of them.

14. See John xxi. 18, 19.

17. 18. See Matt. xvii. 1—Mark ix. 2, 3. Luke ix. 28.

to

to testify this great truth, having been admitted to that glorious vision on the mount, when Christ was declared, by a voice from heaven, to be the Son of God. But you have the most convincing proof of this truth from prophecy, which you will do well to consider as what above all other things tends to throw the light of truth upon your minds; knowing that no prophecy is of private interpretation, or of human origin; but that all the prophetic writings were dictated to holy men, for great purposes, by the Spirit of God.

19.

20. 21.

But as there were false prophets under the law, so shall there be false teachers under the gospel; who shall

CHAP.
II.
1.

19. It has always given me peculiar pleasure to read St. Peter's encomium on prophecy; as prophecy is the most convincing evidence of the truth of our religion. Bp. Burnet gives a remarkable instance of it's force in the conversion of that celebrated penitent, the Earl of Rochester; who was struck with nothing so much, as the comparison of Christ's death with the liiid chapter of Isaiah. — These words however, tho they appear very plain, have given occasion to much dispute. See Bowyer's conjectures. — Some suppose, they may allude to what the Jews call the *Bath-col*, or *daughter of a voice*; which was supposed by the credulous, and superstitious, to be a mode of prophecy. The apostle's argument, on this supposition, is, that as the voice he had heard, proclaiming Jesus to be the son of God, might be considered by some people among the idle stories of prophetic voices, he bad them recollect, that this truth was founded on prophecy.

20. The expression, *private interpretation* should, I think, check much of that readiness, with which many have applied the prophetic writings to the events of history. Many of these events have little relation to Christ's kingdom; to which all prophecy, in some shape, or other, seems intended to point.

1. *The Lord who bought them*, is commonly interpreted of God, rather than of Christ; as the word *ἀγοράζων* is never applied to Christ

2. 3. shall introduce vile heresies, denying even the Lord, who bought them; and shall draw upon themselves a sudden ruin. They shall influence many; and deceive them through interested views; and bring great slander on the truth; till their destruction, which is advancing apace, shall suddenly overwhelm them.

4. 5. 6. 7. 8. Nor is this destruction, which is coming upon the Jews, an extraordinary instance of God's justice. Against enormous wickedness he hath often executed severe judgments. The angels, that sinned, were driven from the presence of God. The old world was destroyed by a flood: and Sodom, and Gomorrha by fire. But from the former of these calamities, Noah, who had endeavoured to convert his unrighteous neighbours, was exempted: and from the latter, Lot was delivered, who had all along opposed the wickedness of the country, in which he dwelt.

9. Thus mercy, and judgment are equally tempered in
10. the hands of God.—But chiefly they, who give themselves up to uncleanness, to pride, and blas-

Christ in the New Testament, and as the verse seems to allude to Deut. xxxii. 6; in which God is said to have *bought Israel*. But tho the words might *primarily have that meaning*, I think it more probable, that the apostle *applied* them to Christ.—By the *false teachers* who bring in *damnable heresies*, some suppose the apostle means the Nicolaitans, an abominable sect mentioned Revel. ii. 6. Church history informs us, that this sect was soon extinguished. See Mosheim vol. I. p. 116, and Dr. Whitby in locum. Whoever they were, they seem from many passages in this chapter, to have been Christians—to have held heretical opinions, and to have propagated their tenets.—The *swift destruction* seems to correspond with the destruction of Jerusalem.

phemy,

phemy, provoke His judgments. So far are they 11. 12. 13.
from imitating the mildness, and gentleness of hea- 14.
venly beings, with which they profess to be so well
acquainted; that, as if they were totally deprived
even of human reason, they draw ruin upon them-
selves by blasphemously intruding into things they
understand not—by the abominable impurity of their
lives—and by their endeavours to lead others into
the same wickedness, which they practise themselves.
Like Balaam, they are continually corrupting such as 15.
will listen to them, to promote unworthy ends of
their own; unmoved by the plainest appearances of 16.
God Almighty's displeasure. Like dry springs, they 17.
have no issues of life. Like tempestuous clouds,
they are for ever involved in darkness. Through 18.
vanity, and sensual allurements, it is their business to
mislead new converts. While they themselves are 19.
slaves to their lusts, they promise liberty to others:
tho no bondage can be so severe, as the bondage of
vicious passions. Such a case as theirs, is, of all 20. 21.
others, the most calamitous. To be again entangled

10. It is not easy to explain, whom the apostle means to point out in this and the following verses. Some suppose, he alludes to certain false opinions, which prevailed about heavenly beings. Others, (among whom is Dr. Lardner, see Cred. b. I. ch. viii. p. 199) think, that some expressions in these verses allude to the riotous disposition of the Jews, which finally brought on their destruction. The chief difficulty lies in the confusion of the several ideas.

15. In the Syriac version, it is Balaam the son of Beor. It is supposed that St. Peter writes Bosor for Beor in the Chaldee dialect.

22.
 CHAP.
 III.

1. 2.

in the pollutions of the world, after they had once known the truth, is certainly a much more dangerous situation, than that of having never known it. It shews so innate a corruption of heart, that there is no farther hope of recovery.

3.

This is the second epistle, my brethren, I have written to you, with a view chiefly to confirm your principles by drawing your attention to the prophets, and to us the apostles of Christ. The impurities of

4.

the world will always make men enemies to religion: and you will hear them forming their objections to

5. 6. 7.

the promises, and threatnings of the gospel, merely because they see things continuing in the same natural order, in which they have long continued; as if God had given no proofs even in the external world, of his power, and government; or, as if the destruction of the earth once by water, is not proof sufficient of God's being able to destroy it a second time by fire.

8.

—Be not you, my brethren, misled by these tenets of infidelity. Time is nothing with the Almighty.

9.

Compared with eternity, a day, and a thousand years are portions of equal value. Man judging according to his own confined ideas, attributes tardiness to

22. The great difference of style between the iid chapter of St. Peter's second epistle, and all the other parts both of that epistle, and the former, hath been observed by all critics. Bp. Sherlock (on Proph. Diff. 1) supposes, the apostle to have extracted these passages, at least the sense of them, from some Jewish writings then extant. And this appears the rather, from comparing this chapter with the epistle of St. Jude, which seems to have been taken from the same original.

God;

God; not considering, that he is merciful, and long-suffering, and desirous, that all should come to repentance. But notwithstanding this long-suffering, when the day of the Lord does come, it will come suddenly, dissolving at once all earthly connections.

Since then, my brethren, this shall be the great issue of things, what effect should the consideration of it have on us? What should our conversation, and behaviour in this world be, when we reflect, how soon both we, and it shall be dissolved? But the thoughts of these things give *us* no distress. *We* rely on God's gracious promise, that we shall be restored to a new and better world—the habitation of the righteous. As you live in constant hope therefore of this glorious change; take care always to be found in that holy state, in which you ought to meet it; and consider every moment of delay in the Almighty,

as

15. See Rom. ii. 4.—St. Peter, with great propriety, takes this opportunity of mentioning St. Paul; because these two epistles were written to those countries, where St. Paul had first preached; and to those churches, which he had established. St. Peter had seen, no doubt, St. Paul's epistles; and by mentioning his name, gives his sanction to his doctrine. Tho St. Paul had withstood him to his face, and rebuked him openly (Gal. ii. 11) he had no animosity on that head. These two holy apostles might err; and might have different sentiments: but as they both had one great end in view, they never lost sight of that; and were, of course, unanimous.

16. The words, *in which are some things hard to be understood*, are commonly applied to St. Paul's epistles. But the grammatical construction does not make that necessary. *Εν οἷς* being neuter, cannot agree with *ἐπιστολαίς*, which is feminine. *Εν οἷς*, rather seems

- as a new instance of his mercy to you. Thus also our beloved brother Paul hath instructed you; exhorting you to receive with holy gratitude, the long-suffering of God; considering that His goodness is intended to lead you to repentance. No doubt there is some difficulty in these things, on which I have been discoursing to you; and which they who are ill-disposed to the gospel, pervert, as they do other parts
17. of scripture, to their own destruction. Take care, my brethren, that you be not led away by these errors, of which I have given you sufficient warning:
18. but continue to increase in every holy grace; and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; to whom be glory both now, and for ever: Amen!

to refer to *the things* which Peter himself had been discoursing about; particularly to the *promise of his coming* (ch. iii. 4) or *the resurrection*; which was a great stumbling-block to many of the early Christians. Some said the resurrection was past. Others wanting patience to wait longer for it, left the Christian assemblies: and many conceiving it to be a thing impossible, gave no credit to it at all. No doubt, says the apostle, there is difficulty in these things, which the *unstable wrest*, &c.—It must not however be concealed, that some MSS. of great credit read *as*. But I think, it is the worse reading, on a supposition that the two readings are equally authorized: for, tho many things in St. Paul's epistles may, for obvious reasons, be *hard to be understood* by us; yet one should hardly believe, that St. Paul (writing *according to the wisdom given unto him*) could be really *hard to be understood* by those, to whom he wrote. Nor is it likely, I think, that St. Peter, if it had been so, would have lessened the credit of St. Paul in his own churches, by giving them to understand, that he thought St. Paul an unintelligible writer.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE
OF PETER.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

THREE EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

IN the first of these epistles, St. John gives an idea of the general intention of the gospel; which was founded on the fall of man; and meant to purify his nature anew. He then dwells on Christian charity; and cautions his readers against the love of the world, which he considers as the cause of all irreligion. He exhorts to perseverance—describes the children of God—holds out the example of Christ—marks the character of the deceiver; and of the true Christian—concluding with a short proof of the truth of the gospel.

The second epistle may be called an abstract of the first. It touches, in few words, on the same points.

The third is chiefly a commendation of Gaius.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

THREE EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

In the list of these epistles, St. John gives an idea of the general intention of the gospel, which was founded on the fall of man; and means to purify his nature, and then dwell on Christian charity, and contains the marks against which the world went, and the state of all things. He shows to perfection the children of God, and the character of Christ—marks the character of the deceivers, and the true Christian—concluding with a short proof of the end of the gospel.

The second epistle may be called an abridgement. It contains a few words of the same point, and the third is a continuation of the same.

FIRST EPISTLE

OF

ST. JOHN.

CHAP.
I.

FROM the many circumstances, my brethren, with regard to the life of Christ, to which I have been witness myself, I infer his eternal Godhead, and union with the Father; before his manifestation in the world. And on this evidence we have invited you into the same gracious fellowship in God, and Christ, which we enjoy; that your happiness in the profession of these holy truths may be as great as ours.

But you must well consider the conditional part of this gracious covenant. It is the constant tenor of the gospel, that God is a being of infinite purity;

6. 7. *Light and darkness* are often used in scripture, and particularly in St. John's works, to express a *life of purity*, and a *life of wickedness*.

and

6. and that no one can have fellowship with him, who
 7. allows himself in the practice of any sin. On the
 other hand, he, who leads a life of purity, is both
 in communication with the Christian church; and
 may be assured, that the blood of Christ will make
 8. 9. 10. atonement for all his repented sins.—Thus the
 whole foundation of our redemption is laid in the
 sinfulness of our nature. He who denies this; and
 goes about to establish the righteousness of man, con-
 contradicts the whole scheme of Christianity: while he,
 who piously confesses, and forsakes his sins, shall
 through his Saviour's merits receive forgiveness.—
 CHAP. II.
 1. 2. My first wish therefore in what I say, is to guard
 you, as much as possible, against sin: my second, to
 set before you, if you have sinned, Jesus Christ as
 the only propitiation for sin; and not for our sins
 only, but for the sins of the whole world. At the same
 3. time the only test we can give of our being the objects
 of this mercy, is to observe faithfully the precepts of
 the gospel. He who pretends to the hopes of Chris-
 4. tianity without this, may as well endeavour to recon-
 cile the greatest contradictions: while he, who obeys
 5. 6. the gospel, following with reverence those blessed
 steps, which went before him, is perfected more and
 more in holiness, by the love of God.
 7. And now, my brethren, in this I give you no
 new commandment; for the moral law was always a
 rule of duty. Only thus far the commandment is
 8.

8. *Which thing is true in him, and in you—in Christ, who gave the example—and in you, who ought to follow it.*

new;

new; the gospel hath explained and heightened some of the precepts of morality; particularly the duty of charity. For the practice of this duty, in it's most improved state, is the very badge of the Christian profession; and he who does not thus practise it, whatever his professions may be, is still in heathen darkness. The young convert, who hath just had his sins forgiven, and been made acquainted with the mercies of God, ought to shew his thankfulness by the conscientious practice of this duty. The confirmed Christian, who hath known his duty from the beginning, it may be hoped, will practise it. While he, who hath made no great advance; yet having seen the efficacy of the gospel in reclaiming him from sin, will feel it also in giving him a love for his neighbour.

Now the great point in clearing the way for the love of God, is to guard against a love for the world. This principle, you may be assured, is wholly inconsistent with a regard for the duties of religion. The simplicity of the gospel, and the pride, and vanity of the world, agree very ill together.—And yet one might suppose, that the transitory condition of all the pleasures of this world; and the stability of future happiness, would be strong arguments against the delusions of life.

13. Dr. Doddridge wishes to leave out this verse, which he conjectures was left out in the original. No doubt, there is an unaccountable tautology in it; and indeed in all these three verses, the 12th, the 13th, and the 14th, there is great difficulty.

Let

18. Let me now remind you, that the calamities of the Jewish state are approaching fast. You have heard that deceivers will then abound. The appearance of so many at present shew, that this calamitous time is not far distant. They pretended a gospel-commission; but their leaving us, plainly shewed they had different views. You, who have received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, are in no danger, I hope, from their deceptions. Nor do I write this to you through any diffidence: but just to mark the character of Antichrist, which consists in denying Jesus to be the
- 19.
- 20.
- 21.
22. 23.

18. Some interpreters, tho but few, will not allow the *last time*, in this place, to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem; but rather to the short duration of human life. But the deceivers, who are so constantly represented as accompanying the destruction of Jerusalem, seem rather to connect it with that event.—The *last time* is however often a phrase of wider import. The sacred writers seem frequently to divide time into two large portions; the *former*, and the *latter*: the *former* time included the whole period before the gospel; and the *latter* time, or the *last times*, included every period after it. Agreeably to this partition of time, they sometimes speak of Christ's *first*, and sometimes of his *second* coming. His first coming, including every event of the gospel to the consummation of all things, is often also divided into smaller portions. "*Christ comes in each division, that is, as oft as he thinks fit to interpose by any signal act of his power and providence. The whole period, in which any distinct state of his kingdom is carrying on, is likewise called the LATTER TIME; and the concluding part of that period is distinguished by the name of the LAST HOUR; as if the whole of each period were considered as one day, and the close of each period, as the end or last hour of the day. Thus the time that elapsed from Christ's ascension to the destruction of Jerusalem, being one of the subdivisions beforementioned, is called the LATTER TIMES; and the eve of it's destruction is called the LAST HOUR. HE WAS COMING, through the whole time; HE CAME in the end of it.*" This very accurate, and judicious observation I had from Bp. Hurd. See his VIIth sermon on proph.

Messiah.

Messiah. Assure yourselves that no man can deny Christ, who hath a just idea of God himself.

In the mean time, hold fast that faith, which hath been preached to you from the beginning, in the Father, and the Son; on which rest all your hopes of eternal life. Seducers will always be endeavouring to mislead you. But that divine Spirit, which hath thus far led you into the truth; will, I doubt not, preserve you in it. Consider the awfulness of that great day, when we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. As certain as God is pure, so certain is it, that none but persons of purity can stand before him. Such only he calls his children: such only are the objects of his love. At the same time, we must not expect, that the world, which rejects God, will regard his children.—But tho God is graciously pleased to call us his children, we have yet a very imperfect conception of the happiness intended for us. One thing we know, that as we shall hereafter be with Christ, we shall resemble him.

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C H A P.
III.

1.

2.

1. We are told in the letters of the Danish missionaries (No. 7. p. 56) that when a Malabar convert was employed to translate a catechism, in which the expression, *we shall be the sons of God*, occurred; he was struck with the boldness of it, and durst not translate it verbally; but rather wished to translate it, *we shall be permitted to kiss God's feet*.

2. *When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him, as he is.* The argument here, is, that we must be accommodated to objects, in order to see them. As our eyes, for instance, must have microscopic powers, and be, as it were, assimilated to the minutiae of nature, in order to see them: so must we be hereafter in our spiritual vision: we must be like Christ, that is, we must be assimilated to him, before we can see him, as he is.

And

3. And this hope should make us wholly intent on purifying our earthly nature. Every wilful sin is directly opposite to our profession. It opposes the very intention of Christ's coming; which was to take away sin. The Christian religion expects a steady compliance with it's precepts. The *wilful transgressor* therefore hath no conception of it's truth.
7. Let no man, then, my brethren, deceive you. Your holy lives alone make you the children of God. He, who sins wilfully, becomes the child of the devil. A true sense of religion prevents all wilful sin: and above all other sins, it will prevent those of hatred, and malice; which are most opposite to all our holy hopes. Brotherly love is the very badge of our profession. But the wicked world, after the example of Cain, will persecute the true Christian, because he is more righteous than they. Be you happy however in the thought, that you shall thus attain that heavenly temper, which will qualify you for everlasting life. He, who suffers malicious passions to get possession of his heart, effectually shuts himself out from the favour of God. What an example have we in Christ to rouse us to kindness, and affection! What acts of charity can we refuse to others, when we consider, that he laid down his life for us! And can we suppose that person to have any of this heavenly love in him, who refuses to administer the trifling things of this world to the necessities of a brother? We may talk of charity: but it is of no value, if it dwell only on our lips.

It

It must sink into the heart, and become a principle of action. It is then only that we can have any assurance before God. If we are conscious, that our charity is pretence, we should be conscious also that God sees our hypocrisy. Our confidence before Him can depend only on our sincerity; and it is this holiness of life, which gives efficacy to our prayers.— In fine, then, the whole sum of the Christian religion consists in two words, faith, and love. If your lives therefore be spent under the influence of these two great principles, you shall enjoy a heavenly communication with God; and may be assured of his favour by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

19.

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23.

24.

And yet, my brethren, you will find much deception in the world, and many pretences to this holy influence. But you have one certain rule to detect imposters. Whoever pretends, that Jesus is not the Messiah; but holds out to the people the expectation of some other deliverer, is certainly a de-

C H A P.
IV.

1.

2.

3.

3. In order to understand the test, which the apostle here mentions, it is necessary to consider, that the interpretation of the prophecies of the Jewish scriptures was, at this time, matter of great controversy. The infidel Jews denied, they were fulfilled in Jesus; and interpreted them of some future Messiah. So that these opinions became a dangerous snare to the whole body of Jewish converts; who were in the way of hearing arguments of this kind sophistically treated. They were a snare also to the heathen convert; when he found that the Jews themselves, to whom these prophecies had been given, and who might be supposed to understand them best, denied that sense of them, which he had been always taught to believe was the basis of Christianity.

luder.

- luder. The acknowledgment therefore of Jesus as
 4. the Messiah is the first test of truth.—A second is
 5. the superiority of those powers, which God has conferred upon his holy servants.—A third, is the
 tendency of the doctrine they teach. The doctrine
 of the deluder is of a worldly nature. He speaks
 6. only to the world; and the world only are his hearers. But our doctrines have a spiritual view; and
 are understood only by the spiritual; and these circumstances form a distinction between them, and the
 doctrines of delusion.
7. But above all things, let us shew brotherly kindness
 to each other; as nothing makes us more the children
 8. of God. He that loveth not his brother, can have no knowledge of God; for God is love.
 9. How was that love discovered to us in the death of
 10. Christ! We had no love for him, when he shewed that stupendous instance of love to us in dying for
 11. our sins. How ought we then, in imitation of such
 12. goodness, to love each other?—We cannot, it is true, see God: but we have the strongest proof of
 his dwelling in us, if we feel our hearts full of love
 13. to each other. God will then shew that we are his,
 14. 15. by shedding his Holy Spirit upon us; through which we testify the coming of Christ into the world; and
 16. shew that salvation depends only on him. In this great act of our Saviour's love, we firmly trust—and are assured, that he who approaches nearest to
 that divine affection, which Christ shewed, approaches nearest to God. By following the example
 17. of

of our blessed Lord, and making ourselves like him in this world; we hope to meet his favour, and be like him in the next. When the holy flame of love hath once taken possession of our hearts, all vain fears, distress, and uneasiness are excluded, with regard both to this world, and the next.—Thus ought our blessed Saviour to be the object of our love from his great kindness to us.—But let us consider one thing well, that the love of our neighbour, must be the test of our love of God: for a man will hardly love God, who is not the object of his senses; if he hath no love for his brother, who is continually before him.—Thus we have two great tests, as well as principles, of our religion—faith, and love. The love of God consists in keeping his commandments: and if we keep the commandments of God; of course we shall love our neighbour; and shall find our happiness in our obedience. The faith of a Christian, and that regenerating principle; which it introduces in the mind of man, place us above the world: and this faith depends on the evidences given at the baptism, and death of Christ; and on the miracles, which he wrought through the

18.

19.

20. 21.

CHAP.

V.

1. 2. 3.

4. 5.

6.

6. There is always a distinction made in scripture between the *πνευμα*, or Spirit, through which miracles were wrought; and the *ἅγιος πνευμα*, or Holy Ghost, through which the understanding was enlightened; and prophetic gifts, and tongues dispensed. See Heb. ii. 4, and Gal. iii. 5.—Our Saviour gave his disciples power to work miracles; and yet we are expressly told that the *Holy Ghost* was not then given.—There is however great difficulty, no doubt, in the last chapter of St. John's epistle.

VOL. II.

C C

Spirit.

7. Spirit. Two or three witnesses in all human affairs are thought sufficient. To the truth of our religion we have the testimony of three—the Father—the Son—and the Holy Ghost; who, as they are equal in
8. power, unite also in testimony. And this *heavenly* testimony agrees also with the *earthly* one I have mentioned—the miracles, which our Saviour wrought—the evidence, that appeared at his baptism; and
9. the evidence that appeared at his death. Such is the testimony of God to this great truth; which is
10. certainly superior to any human testimony.—Besides, he who truly believes, feels all this evidence fully confirmed in himself. Whereas he who disbelieves, rejects the strongest testimony of God; and
11. 12. gives up all the hopes of his salvation; which depends on his faith in Christ, and obedience to his laws.

7. I shall not enter into the dispute about this famous verse. They who wish to examine it, may consult Mills's edit. of the New Testament. Other divines also have treated it largely. A late ingenious treatise has been written professedly on the subject by Mr. Travis, who hath endeavoured to establish the authority of this text; but he hath had very able opponents. After all, I cannot help observing, that it appears rather below the Christian cause to be so zealous in defending a text, which in all ages hath been thought so very doubtful. I know not whether, for *that* *very reason* I should not wish to leave it in it's uncertainty. The more pains we take to secure it, the more it appears as if we thought the doctrine it contains, rested solely on it's authority; which we do not by any means suppose to be the case.

10. This mode of evidence, however forcible among the first Christians, who were endowed with the visible gifts of the Holy Ghost, hath been too much presumed on in modern times.

Thus

Thus I have endeavoured to shew you on what grounds you may hope for the mercies of God. And this will point out to you the spirit of such prayers, as will find acceptance in his sight. Particularly if any of your society is visited with sickness for his sins, let prayer be made; and if his sin be not of such a nature, as God may think fit to punish with death, (in which case the offender must be left to the divine mercy) the devout prayers of the church will be heard. Every wilful transgression of the law is sin; tho some sins are more heinous than others.—The sincere Christian however, by the grace of God, is in no danger of these great transgressions. While the world around him lies in wickedness, he enjoys the light of God. His religion hath cleared his understanding, and he dwells in God through Christ.

Let the great conclusion from the whole, be, never to entangle yourselves again in the idolatry, and pollutions of a wicked world. Amen!

16. We have many instances in scripture of the *infliction of temporal punishments*. How far it may be agreeable to God's government now, when miraculous powers of all kinds have ceased, we know not: it is certain however we have no right to ascribe any thing of this kind to God's judgments.

16. This is a very difficult passage. I have endeavoured however to explain it agreeably to the sense of James v. 14, 15, 16, which seems to be the best comment upon it.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE
OF ST. JOHN.

CHAPTER V

THE first of the most important
principles of the theory of the
universe is the principle of the
conservation of energy. This
principle states that the total
energy of a system is constant
and cannot be created or
destroyed. It can only be
transformed from one form
into another. This principle
is the basis of all the laws
of physics and chemistry.
It is the foundation of the
science of energy.

THE second of the most important

SECOND EPISTLE

OF

S T. JOHN.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3.

JOHNS the apostle, together with all the Christians of these parts, to the church at Jerusalem, and all it's members—grace, mercy, and peace from God in Christ !

1. It is a disputed point, whether the *elect lady* means some particular person, or some church in general. They who apply the phrase to a church, suppose it the church of Jerusalem; both because St. John was an apostle of the circumcision; and because the word *κυρια*, they think, applies best to a mother-church. Others however suppose some Asiatic church; and in particular the church of Philadelphia, to be meant.—The greater part of interpreters indeed give the phrase a *general*, rather than a *particular* turn. The salutation at the end, from the *children of thy elect sister* favour it; as churches are often thus stiled in scripture. See Isa. xlvii. 5, 6. And indeed there is nothing personal in the whole epistle. Besides, the words *αυτη*, *υμεις*, and *υμιν* are used throughout it. The chief argument, I think, for it's being *particular*, is, that the next epistle is plainly so.

4. It hath always been a great joy to me to find your
 5. members adhering strictly to the faith of Christ, as
 6. it hath been delivered to them. But you will re-
 7. member, that when we preached faith, we always
 8. added love to it : and there is no other way of shew-
 9. ing your love to God, but by keeping his command-
 10. ments. The world is full of deceivers. You will
 11. hear it said by many ; that the true Messiah hath not
 yet appeared. But be upon your guard, lest you
 lose at once all that happiness, which this holy faith
 hath promised. And be assured of this, that there
 is no religion in the world, that is acceptable to
 God, but the religion of Christ.—Considering
 the peril of the times, I should not wish you to have
 communication with those, whose principles, and prac-
 tice are corrupt ; lest such intercourse should corrupt
 you ; and make you partakers of the wicked opinions,
 they may propagate.

12. I have many things to say to you, on these, and
 other heads ; but I shall not mention them now, as
 I propose soon to see you.

13. All the members of this church salute you.

4. The word *truth* in this verse, seems to stand for the *principles*
 of religion. In the 5th verse the apostle speaks of the *practice*,
 which was to follow the *principles*.

7. See a note on 1 John iv. 3.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE
 OF ST. JOHN.



THIRD EPISTLE

OF ST. JOHN.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

JOHN the apostle, to his beloved Gaius, and fellow-disciple in Christ—health, and happiness both in this world, and the next.

The accounts which I have received, of your steadiness in the faith, are highly satisfactory to me. Indeed I have no greater joy, than to hear of the holy lives of Christians.—Your charity, and hospitality to all the brethren; and the assistance you give them on their several journeys, which I hear

3.

4.

5. 6.

1. Who Gaius, or Caius, was, is uncertain. Many suppose he was that person at Corinth, whom St. Paul calls his host; Rom. xvi. 23, and that he was extremely generous, and hospitable to all Christians, who came there. His hospitable temper is strongly marked in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of this chapter.

7. from all people, are most pleasing to me. They
 8. have been ever careful, you know, not to burthen
 the Gentiles; and therefore such as assist them,
 are greatly instrumental in promoting the interests of
 the gospel.

9. I should have written, at this time, to the church
 in general; but I was afraid lest Diotrophes, who
 seems to be fond of power, should have too much
 weight in opposing any thing I could say at a dis-
 10. tance. I propose therefore to check his influence
 by a visit among you; in which I shall correct both
 his words, and actions: particularly that violence of
 temper, with which he refuses to receive the bre-
 thren; and even sets himself against those, who
 11. would receive them. Follow not such examples;
 but take it for granted, that where you see a wrong
 behaviour; there also you will find a want of
 12. faith.—I am glad however, that Demetrius is
 every where so well spoken of. In him I cannot be
 deceived.

9. *I wrote unto the church; ὑπαλά.* The Vulg. and Syr. ac-
 cording to the latitude of *tenses*, construe it, *I would have written*.
 —Commentators are divided in their opinions about Dio-
 trephes. Many suppose, he was not a heretic; but a member
 of the church, whose chief fault was the want of a proper hu-
 mility of mind. But I think the apostle speaks in stronger
 terms against him, than is consistent with this supposition.

11. *He that doeth good is of God:* that is, he who obeys the com-
 mandments of God, shews his belief in that God, who gave the
 commandment.

I have

I have many things to say to you; but I shall not make them the subject of a letter, as I mean speedily to see you.—Peace be with you!—
All here salute you; and the brethren, that are with you.

13. 14.

END OF THE THIRD EPISTLE
OF ST. JOHN.

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P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

ST. JUDE is scarce mentioned in the evangelical history, except in the different catalogues of the apostles. He is among those, who are called the *brethren of our Lord*; by which expression some understand him to have been the son of Joseph, by a former wife; and others, a relation of Mary's. Eusebius * tells us, (from Hegesippus, a Christian Jew, born in the beginning of the second century) that Domitian, in a fit of jealousy, ordering enquiry to be made after the posterity of David, some of the grand-children of St. Jude were brought before him. The emperor first asking them several questions about their profession, and manner of life, which was husbandry; inquired next about the kingdom of Christ? And when it should appear? To this they answered, That it was a spiritual, not a temporal kingdom; and that it should not be manifested, till the end of the world.—On this the emperor, finding they were

* Lib. III. cap. iv.

mean persons, and their principles perfectly harmless, dismissed them.

The great intention of this epistle is to exhort Christians to persevere in the faith—to avoid the wickedness of the times—and to be on their guard against deceivers.

TO THE

EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

St. JUDE is scarce mentioned in the evangelical history, except in the different catalogues of the apostles. He is among those who are called the unknown of the East; by which expression some understand him to have been the son of Joseph, by a former wife; and others, a relation of Mary. Pseudo-crisostomus tells us (from Jerome) that a Christian Jew, born in the beginning of the second century, that Dominian, in a fit of jealousy, or being envious to be made after the posterity of David, some of the grand-children of St. Jude were brought before him. The emperor had asked them several questions about their doctrine, and manner of life, which was answered by him, next about the kingdom of Christ. And when it should appear, To this day answered, That it was a spiritual and corporal kingdom, and that it should not be manifested till the end of the world. On this the emperor, being angry, said

St. Jude

GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

S. T. JUDE.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

JUDE the servant of Christ, and brother of James, to all Christians, however dispersed—mercy, peace, and love!

My chief purpose in this epistle, is to exhort you to persevere steadily in the faith, which you have received; for many deceivers are now abroad in the world (as it was prophesied there should be) who denying the first principles of faith, change Christian charity into worldly lusts. But I should wish to admonish you, (tho you have been well instructed in these things) of the terrible judgments of God against wickedness.—After the Israelites had been

4. Thus I should translate the words, *of old ordained to this condemnation.*

delivered

6. delivered out of Egypt, you remember what wrath,
and destruction, attended their obstinate perverseness.—Even the angels, who swerved from their
7. allegiance to God, were not spared; but are reserved for the judgment of the great day.—The examples of Sodom, and Gomorrah, and the cities around them—their vile lusts—and the punishment they drew upon themselves, can never be forgotten.

8. 9. 10. And yet, you see, what wickednesses prevail—what abominable uncleanness—what general corruption—what opposition to all government! The very language of men discovers the pollution of their hearts, Even their traditional accounts, so much the object of their attention, in which the contest is related between Michael, and the devil, about the body of Moses, give them very different instruction. There,

7. *Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*—that is, those cities were for ever destroyed. The apostle cannot well mean future punishments; because he mentions it as a *Δειγμα*—something that was to be a visible example to all. That word (deriving from *δεικνυμαι* to show or exhibit) properly signifies to give a sample of something to be sold.

9. We are under the necessity of making the best sense we can, of this very difficult passage, which has received so little elucidation from the hands of commentators.—They who do not like the supposition, that the apostle alludes to some traditional account of the angels burying the body of Moses, which the devil wished to have discovered, that the people might worship it, may suppose that he alludes to Zech. iii. 2, in which Joshua, the high-priest, is represented standing before the angel of the Lord; and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him: to whom the angel said, The Lord rebuke thee. Joshua the high-priest may stand for the Jewish people; which *the body of Moses* in this passage may also represent. It is a familiar mode of speaking; St. Paul calls Christians *the body of Christ*.

tho the contention was so debasing, the arch-angel treats his adversary even with gentleness: while the wicked people of these days follow the examples of the very worst persons they find recorded in the bible-history—the malice of Cain—the covetousness, and seducing arts of Balaam—and the implacable opposition of Corah. A feast of charity they turn into wantonness. Like unwholsome air, they blast wherever they come. Like withered trees, they only incumber the ground. Like waves, they spend their rage only in foam. Like uncertain meteors, their light soon sets in darkness.—Against such persons Enoch prophesied, when speaking of the old world, he threatens them with God's holy displeasure for their enormous crimes. Nor can those times furnish worse examples, than these, of pride, uncleanness, and wickedness of every kind.

11.

12.

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14. 15.

16.

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18. 19.

But do you, my brethren, always keep in mind, what you have so often heard predicted; that at this time, deceivers should arise who should separate themselves from the church—relinquish all its blessings—and in the spirit of sensuality, follow their own lusts.—You, in the mean time, being firmly esta-

20. 21.

12. The text says *twice dead*; the apostle may mean, that they were once wicked Jews, and having apostatized, are now wicked Christians. Or perhaps he only expresses more strongly their deadness, as Virgil expressing happiness, says, ———terque, quaterque beati.

14. We have no account of any such prophecy; unless the apostle alludes to the name of his son *Methuselah*, which signifies, that *after his death, should succeed destruction*, that is the flood.

blished

blished in the faith, and having a holy communication with God, through the Spirit, keep steadily obedient to the divine laws; and wait patiently for that blessed reward, which is promised to you through Christ.

22. 23.

Treat the weak with gentleness—the stubborn, and obstinate with severity; having affection for their persons, while you abominate their crimes.

24. 25.

And may that gracious God, who created, and redeemed you, preserve you faultless to that great day! To him be glory, majesty, and dominion, for ever. Amen!

END OF THE EPISTLE BY

ST. JUDE.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

THE Revelation of St. John seems universally acknowledged to be a very authentic part of the sacred canon. It is mentioned as such by some of the earliest fathers; particularly by Ireneus, who lived in the second century, and was acquainted with Policarp, who had been the disciple of St. John himself.—After citing the authority of so early a father, it is needless to adduce the testimony of later writers—Clement, Tertullian, Origen, and others, who are yet full to the same purpose.

True it is, that, in after ages (probably as certain prophecies, those of Antichrist in particular, began to unfold themselves with a severer aspect) some learned men ventured to hesitate, and propose doubts. But on laying the whole of the evidence together, the deepest inquirers into this work, have professed themselves fully convinced of its authenticity. At the head of these we may place the learned Joseph Mede, who is esteemed an able commentator on this mysterious book. He gives it plainly as his opinion, that the revelation of St. John depends on as indisputable authority, as that of any other book of the

New Testament*.—Sir Isaac Newton, with equal confidence, in his observations on Daniel, hesitates not to make the same assertion.—To these testimonies we may add that of Dr. Lardner†, who is second to none in learning, and accurate researches. This able inquirer hath fully collected all the evidence as it stands on both sides of the question; and on a review of the whole, expresses himself clearly satisfied of the authenticity of this book.

After fixing the authenticity of it, the next object of our inquiry is the intention of it. It is supposed to hold out the prophetic history of the church of Christ, to the latest period. Many interpreters conceive the visions it contains to be detached, and independent. Others suppose the whole texture of it to be wrought into one uniform, consistent plan. Among the latter is Mr. Mede, who divides it into three great parts.—The first part, he supposes, contains the epistles to the seven churches; and is not conceived by him to be of a prophetic nature. This part is comprized in the three first chapters.—The second part contains the visions of the *sealed book*; on the leaves of which the civil revolutions of the Roman empire, as they are connected with the church, are supposed to be portrayed in a kind of prophetic tabature. This part begins at the fourth chapter; and ends with the ninth.—The third part, which commences at the tenth chapter, is called the vision of the *open book*; and is delivered under an image, not unfrequent in the prophetic writers, of eating a book; which fills the prophet with the visions it contains. This part is supposed to hold forth the latter

* See his works, p. 602.

† p. 249.

‡ Hist. of the writers of the N. T. ch. 22.

periods of the church; it's apostasy from the truth, and it's final restoration.—And as the plan of the whole is supposed by this learned writer to be consistent, the prophecies contained under each vision, are conceived to fall in with it: they are in general thought to synchronize, or to relate to the same events. Thus the seventh seal is supposed to contain the seven trumpets; and the seventh trumpet to contain the seven vials.

Such is the plan of Mr. Mede. How far he, and other writers, who have followed, or deviated from his steps, have been successful in elucidating this very mysterious book, must still be left as matter of great uncertainty. The obscurity of the subject makes it easy to hazard an ingenious conjecture: and, no doubt many things have been said upon it, which have nothing better than ingenious conjecture to support them; especially in explaining the detail of each prophecy, in which perhaps many little circumstances, not essential to the main subject of it, are interpreted with a precision below the dignity of the prophet. How easily the wit of man may err in *conjecturing* on this difficult subject, may be illustrated by a remarkable story, which bishop Burnet* tells of the learned bishop Lloyd of Worcester, who had employed twenty years of profound study on this mysterious book. In the year 1696, it seems the emperor concluded a peace with the Turks. On this occasion, bishop Lloyd informed his friends, with great confidence, that this was the last war, in which the Turks should ever engage with the emperor; that their power was now abridged; and that he did not say this from conjecture; but founded it on the revelations of St. John.—How clearly he un-

* See his Hist. of his own time, V. II. p. 204.

derstood the revelations of St. John, the gazettes of Europe may inform us.

Prophecy was certainly given us to *prove the truth*; not to *exercise the imagination*. When therefore we pretend to be prophets ourselves, by predicting an event from the revelations, or any other prophetic part of scripture, *before* the completion of it, we may easily fall into the error of the good bishop. If a prophecy be not clearly compleated; if it be not almost like a mathematical demonstration, self-evident; if the wit of man be still necessary to unfold, and explain it; it is no proof. It wants itself to be proved. All the grand prophecies, on which the truth of Christianity depends, have been thus clearly compleated. No candid person doubts the completion of those prophecies, which relate to the life, and death of the Messiah—to the call of the Gentiles—to the rejection of the Jews—and to the destruction of Jerusalem. On some *particular prophecies* hesitation may arise; but the whole together carries full conviction. But with regard to the apocalyptic prophecies, we have not that precision. They still want a full completion. Of this, the *various interpretations* of them, which are given to this day, are sufficient proof. The characters of Antichrist indeed are so strongly marked, and have been so *generally acknowledged*, through all the reformed parts of Europe, as the chief ground of their defection from Rome, that we run little risk, I think, in applying them to the Romish church. These marks indeed are furnished not only by St. John; but also by St. Paul, in his delineation of the *man of sin*.—Equally pointed is the prophecy of the whore of Babylon*. The value of the argument, on this

* The reader may see the sum of what has been written on this subject, well explained, and brought to a point, in bishop Hurd's lectures, preached at Lincoln's inn.

P R E F A C E.

v

subject, may, in a degree be ascertained from the course of it. The protestants first took it up; and applied the character of the whore of Babylon to papal Rome. The marks of the *beast* were so strong, that the papists themselves, in part, acknowledged them; that is, they have generally allowed, that the city of Rome was figured by Babylon: but they have endeavoured to prove, that it was *imperial*, not *papal* Rome, which the prophet meant to delineate. The evasion is awkward; both because the marks do not correspond with imperial Rome; and because they were never affixed to it, till after the protestants had first applied them to the papacy.

After all, however, I know not that we have any right in charity, to *determine absolutely*, that the whore of Babylon is the church of Rome, till we see that church reduced to the low condition of the apocalyptic whore. There is no occasion, it is true, to suppose her fall to be instantaneous; but gradual: and she hath no doubt, in a great degree fallen from her imperial dignity: yet still, while she continues to exist—especially in that splendor, which at present she maintains, we should interpret these mysterious characters with caution. *Till Babylon is fallen, the prophecy is not completely fulfilled.*

In the mean time, tho we cannot understand all the mysterious parts of this singular book; yet (it's divine authority being safe) we take it into our hands with the utmost reverence; and consider it as a deposit for the confirmation of the faith of future ages. It is to us precisely what the prophecies of the Old Testament were to the Jews; nor in any degree more inexplicable. No prophecies in the revelation can be more clouded with obscurity, than that a child should be born of a pure virgin—that a mortal should not see corruption—that a person despised, and numbered among malefactors, should
be

be established for ever on the throne of David. Yet still the pious Jew preserved his faith intire amidst all these wonderful, and in appearance contradictory intimations. He looked into the holy books, in which they were contained, with reverence; and with an eye of patient expectation, waited for the *consolation of Israel*. We, in the same manner, look up to these prophecies of the apocalypse for the full consummation of the great scheme of the gospel; when Christianity shall finally prevail over all the corruptions of the world; and be universally established in it's utmost purity.

But besides the prophetic character of this book, it is, in other respects, of a very singular construction. No writings perhaps ever exhibited so great a variety of sublime ideas; and such astonishing grandeur of divine imagery. So that if we consider the revelation of St. John only as a poetical description of the celestial regions; and the dispensations of God; it is a very delightful, and interesting composition. The glories of heaven in the fourth chapter; the picture of death in the sixth; together with the consummation of all things; and the terrors of the wicked, are grand representations. How sublime is the idea, in the seventh chapter, of the angels restraining the winds?—How nobly are the angels introduced in the eighth, with the seven trumpets; and with what poetical imagery does the smoke of the incense carry up the prayers of the saints before the throne of God?—The sounding of the fourth trumpet is very grand; and the flight of the angel through the coopes of heaven, denouncing woe upon the earth.—The ascent of the locusts in the smoke of the bottomless pit; the description of them; and the sounding of their wings in their flight, are all circumstances highly poetical; as are also the loosing the four angels from the banks of Euphrates,

phrates, on the sounding of the sixth trumpet; the description of the angel with the open book at the beginning of the tenth chapter; the reaping of the earth in the middle of the fourteenth; the grand scene in the fifteenth, on sending out the seven angels with vials; and the pouring out particularly of the last of them.—After these splendid passages follows that noble scene in the eighteenth chapter, in which the fall of Babylon is described; and the pathetic lamentations made over her, by the kings, and merchants of the earth.—The seventeenth and eighteenth verses of the nineteenth chapter are wonderfully sublime; in which an angel standing in the sun is represented calling the birds of prey to the banquet of the Lord, as the host of heaven is led out to battle.—The sealing up of the dragon; and the general judgment in the twentieth chapter; and the descent of the New Jerusalem in the twenty-first, close these sublime passages with equal grandeur.

The generality of these visions, as hath been observed, are represented under the idea of pictures, portrayed on the leaves of a book. The prophet therefore employs picturesque, as well as poetic imagery; and hath marked the various figures he hath introduced, with such a glow of colouring, and strength of expression, as plainly shew, how much his imagination was fired with the original.

The mysterious parts of this wonderful book, I have not attempted to explain, contenting myself merely with illustrating the narrative. Here too I have been more cautious in modernizing, than in the gospels, and epistles. As I endeavoured there to *explain*, I was obliged often to give up the dignity, and simplicity of the expression, for the sake of making the narrative, or the doctrine, more easy. But here, as I have made no attempts of that kind, I have left the text more pure; and more in possession of those bold, eastern modes of speaking, which add so much to it's grandeur.

11

[illegible]

REVELATION

OF

S T. JOHN.

CHAP.

I.

THE following is a revelation from God, through Christ, concerning things relating to the kingdom of the Messiah, which shall soon be accomplished.—This revelation God gave to his servant John; who had already borne testimony to the truth. Happy are they, whom it concerns, if they attend obediently to the prophecies contained in it; the completion of which approaches.

John to the seven churches of Asia, grace, and peace from the eternal, immutable God; from the Holy Ghost; and from Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead, and is now exalted to infinite glory!

1. The expression, *which must shortly come to pass*, need not be supposed to denote any *immediate completion*; but to be spoken in the language of heaven, in which a *thousand years are as one day*.

—To

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6. —To him, who hath redeemed us with his blood;
 7. and given us access to the Father, be glory and do-
 minion for ever, and ever; Amen! —I see him
 coming in the clouds of heaven! every eye shall see
 him—his murderers shall acknowledge his power—
 8. all the tribes of the earth shall mourn before him.
 Amen! Amen! —Thus he proclaims his glorious
 approach. I AM THE FIRST, AND THE LAST—THE
 BEGINNING, AND THE END—WHO IS, AND WAS, AND
 IS TO COME—THE ETERNAL, ALMIGHTY GOD.

9. I John, the companion of your afflictions, and the
 partaker of your hope in Christ, was in the island
 10. of Patmos, where I had been banished on account
 of the faith: and being earnestly engaged on the
 Lord's day, in meditation and prayer, I heard a voice
 behind me, loud as a trumpet, saying, I am the be-
 11. ginning, and the end—the first and the last. Write
 what thou seest, in a book; and send it to the
 churches of Asia—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos,
 Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

6. 7. These verses seem to be a sort of analysis of what is con-
 tained in the book—that is, the full conclusion of the Christian
 dispensation. They seem to contain the great moral of the
 whole.

9. Patmos was one of the Cyclades in the Egean sea, where
 St. John was banished, according to Ireneus, about the year 96.

11. If you inspect a map of Asia Minor, you will find these
 churches lie in a circular order; so that if you begin at Ephesus,
 you may visit them all in the rotation marked by the apostle;
 which was probably the course of his visitation.

Surprized

Surprized at this wonderful voice, I turned to see 12.
 from whence it issued; and saw seven golden candle-
 sticks hanging in circular order; and in the midst of 13.
 them an awful figure, like the Son of man. He
 was cloathed in a long robe, girt round him with
 a golden girdle. His hair and countenance were 14. 15. 16.
 bright, like snow; his eyes like a flame of
 fire; and his voice sounded like the fall of
 waters. From his mouth a sharp two-edged sword
 seemed to issue. In his right hand he held seven
 stars; and his feet appeared like brass, glowing in a
 furnace.

At the sight of such an awful figure I was unable
 to speak, and fell down at his feet. He laid his 17.
 hand gently upon me, and said, "Fear not: I am
 the first and the last. I am he, who died, and
 rose again; and now live for ever; and hold the 18.
 keys of everlasting life. Write what thou hast seen.
 This vision relates to present, and future times. 19.
 The seven candlesticks represent seven churches; 20.
 and the seven stars, the ministers of those churches."

To the church of Ephesus, and it's ministers write; CHAP.
 —Thus saith he, who holdeth the seven stars in his II.
 right hand; and standeth in the midst of the seven 1. 2. 3.
 golden candlesticks: I know thy virtuous deeds; thy

12. The seven candlesticks allude to the golden lamp with it's branches in the temple of Jerusalem. Throughout this book indeed there is a constant allusion to the ceremonies, and ritual of the Jewish worship.

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4. patience in affliction ; thy abhorrence of wickedness ;
 5. thy caution against falshood. Yet I have a matter
 against thee. Thy ancient zeal, and love for the
 truth, are in part gone off. Repent of this luke-
 6. warmness. Recover thy old affections ; or I will
 come suddenly, and remove thy candlestick.—Yet
 thou hatest the Nicolaitanes, whom I also hate.—
 7. Let him who hath ears to hear, remember what
 is said to the churches. He who resisteth the temp-
 tations of the world, shall eat of the tree of life, in
 the paradise of God.
 8. To the church of Smyrna, and it's ministers,
 write ;—Thus saith the first, and the last ; he who
 9. was dead, and is alive. I know thy works ; thy
 distresses, and sufferings for religion. God will repay
 thee. I know also the blasphemy of false brethren ;
 10. and their persecution of thee. But fear them not :
 fear not the afflictions, which thou hast yet to suffer
 for the space of ten days. Be faithful unto death ;
 11. and I will give thee a crown of life.—Let him
 who hath ears to hear, remember what is said to
 the churches. He who resisteth the temptations of
 the world, shall not die eternally.

10. Those commentators, who suppose, that these epistles to the churches of Asia, relate to the church of Christ as divided into seven periods, consider the church of Smyrna as representing the church of Christ in it's persecuted state ; making the ten days relate to the ten general persecutions.

To the church of Pergamos, and it's ministers,
 write thus;—These things saith he, from whose
 mouth issues a two-edged sword. I know thy works,
 and thy habitation among those, who oppose the
 truth: and that thou hast still holden fast thy pro-
 fession; particularly in the days of Antipas, my
 faithful martyr. But I have yet against thee thy
 connection with those, who practise the wickedness
 of Balaam; who lay the stumbling block of delusion
 before their brethren; who eat things sacrificed to
 idols, and commit fornication. Such are those of
 the Nicolaitane heresy. Repent therefore of these
 wicked connections; or thou shalt be consumed with
 the sword, that issueth out of my mouth.—Let
 him who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said
 to the churches. He who resisteth the temptations
 of the world, shall be fed with the manna of heaven.
 He shall receive a tablet, inscribed with that secret
 name, which shall intitle him to everlasting life.

To the church of Thyatira, and it's ministers,
 write;—Thus saith he, whose eyes are like a flame
 of fire; and whose feet are like glowing brass. I
 know thy righteous deeds; thy faith; thy services,
 and thy increase in good works. But I have some-
 what against thee, in that thou sufferest thy people
 to be deluded by the witchcrafts of Jezebel; and

17. The *white stone* inscribed, alludes to the custom of passing judgment, making elections, &c. by white, and black stones.

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21. to tread in her idolatrous steps. I have given
 22. them time to repent. If they continue obstinate,
 I will bring my last afflictions upon those, who de-
 lude; and upon those who are deluded; and I will
 23. cut off their posterity; and all the churches shall
 know, that my judgments search deep; and I will
 reward, and punish men according to their works.
 24. As for those, who abhor these delusions, I will leave
 on them such burthens only, as their profession lays
 25. 26. upon them. Hold fast the faith till I come. He
 that resisteth the temptations of the world, and per-
 27. severeth to the end, shall rule over the nations; and
 his spiritual rod shall break in pieces the idolatry of
 28. the land, as a potter's vessel is broken: and I will
 give him the brightness, and glory of the morning
 29. star.—Let him, who hath an ear to hear, remember
 what is said to the churches.

CHAP. III.

1.

2.

3.

4. 5.

To the church of Sardis, and it's ministers, write
 thus;—These things saith he, who holdeth the seven
 stars, and with whom are the seven spirits of God.
 I know thy deeds, and the name thou holdest among
 the churches. But thy religion is dead. Rouse thy-
 self, and awake it's holy flame in thy breast. Thy
 works are not perfect in the sight of God. Re-
 member the early instructions of thy youth. Hold
 them fast in thy memory; and repent of thy sins.
 If not, I will come upon thee suddenly, and destroy
 thee. A few I have yet in Sardis; holy, and un-
 defiled. These, and all that resist the temptations
 of the world, shall stand before me in white gar-
 ments.

ments. Their names shall not be blotted from the book of life; and I will present them to the Father before all his holy angels.—Let him, who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said to the churches.

To the church of Philadelphia, and it's ministers, write thus;—These things saith the Holy One. He who hath the key of David. He who openeth, and none can shut: He who shutteth, and none can open. I know thy works. I have opened the door before thee; and none can shut it. Thou hast kept my word. Thou hast not denied my name. The apostate Jew shall bow before thee; and shall hereafter acknowledge thee to be the favorite of heaven. Because thou hast patiently kept my word, I will preserve thee from those trials, which are coming on the earth. Behold I will come quickly. Keep thine integrity. Let no man deprive thee of thy crown. He who resisteth the temptations of the world, shall be a pillar in the temple of God. It shall stand immoveable. On it shall be inscribed the name of God; the name also of the city of God, the new Jerusalem; and on it shall be inscribed my own new name.—Let him, who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said to the churches.

To the church of Laodicea, and it's ministers, write thus;—These things saith the truth; the Lord

7. Alluding to Isa. xxii. 22.

8. St. Paul often uses the same image, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. 2 Cor. ii. 12; and again Col. iv. 3.

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15. of the creation. I know thy works; thy professions;
 16. and thy hypocrisy. O that thou wert either a
 thorough Gentile, or a thorough Christian! Thou
 17. art neither; and I reject thee. In the midst of all
 18. thy professions, thou art poor, and wretched. Pur-
 chase thy gold of me; and thou shalt be rich.
 Cloath thyself with the white raiment, that I shall
 give thee; and thy nakedness shall be hid. Anoint
 thine eyes with the ointment of truth; and thou
 19. shalt see. Whom I love, I reprove. Be zealous,
 20. and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.
 21. If any one heareth my voice, and openeth; I enter,
 and abide with him. He who resisteth the tempta-
 tions of the world, shall sit with me on my throne,
 22. as I sit with my Father on his throne.—Let him,
 who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said to
 the churches†.

CHAP.
IV.

1.

After this first vision I had a second. I saw the
 doors of heaven thrown open; and heard a voice
 like the sound of a trumpet, calling to me; Come
 up hither; and I will shew thee what shall come
 to pass.

15. The word *απὸ* is used in this sense in Eph. iii. 10—and Col. i. 16.

† These epistles to the churches are supposed to represent the things that *now are* (see chap. i. 19) or the state of religion in those churches, at the time the apostle wrote.

1. This second vision represents *the things, which shall be hereafter*. (See chap. i. 19). The *door in heaven*, and the trumpet, allude to the opening of the gates of the temple, and calling the Levites to their office.

Immediately

Immediately I was transported into heaven, and saw a glorious form, sitting on a throne. The throne was circled by a varied light, like a rainbow, which emitted from every part, splendid rays, like lightning; while awful sounds of speaking thunder proclaimed aloud the majesty of the appearance. Around the throne sat four and twenty elders, clothed in white garments, with crowns of gold on their heads: and before it hung seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God. The space around it, had the appearance of a sea of crystal.

As I viewed the throne more attentively, I saw it adorned with four animal forms; all endowed with life. The first had the resemblance of a lion; the second, of an ox; the third had a human face;

6. The sea of glass is an image taken from the brazen laver in Solomon's temple.—I think the words in the original, *ἡ μίση τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ κυκλῶ τοῦ θρόνου* will bear the sense, I have given. But I am the more diffident, as I have no where met with it. But it certainly adds much to the dignity of the throne, to suppose, that it's very ornaments are living forms; and have their appointed services. But chiefly it takes from the grossness of the idea in supposing four beasts mixed with the four and twenty elders.—Mr. Mede discovers from the Jewish rabbins, that these four beasts were the four ensigns of Israel, when the twelve tribes were marshalled into four companies. Judah led the first, under the standard of a lion; Ephraim the second, under that of an ox; Reuben the third, under a man; and Dan the fourth, under an eagle.—Others think there is no foundation for this (see Mr. Lowman) but that they rather have allusion to the cherubims in the temple.—Others again suppose, they represented the various gifts, with which God endows his ministers. One has more fortitude; a second more gentleness; a third more wisdom; and a fourth more penetration.—It is plain they allude to the vision of Ezekiel, i. 10.

and the fourth the appearance of an eagle. Each was covered with six wings, and was full of eyes in every part; and all together joined in a chorus of praise to God; Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; who was; and is; and is to come.

9. Immediately on this chorus of praise from the
10. several parts of the throne, the four and twenty
11. elders arose from their seats; and prostrated themselves before Him, that sat on the throne, casting their crowns before Him, and saying, Worthy art Thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for Thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

CHAP
V.

1. 2.

3. 4.

5.

6.

7. 8.

I then saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, a book sealed with seven seals; and I heard an angel ask with a loud voice, Who is able to open the book? But no one appeared. Then I wept. On this one of the elders said, Weep not, behold the Lion of the house of Judah shall loose the seals, and open the book.—And as I looked, behold a lamb stood before the throne, pierced, and bloody, as if it had been slaughtered. It had seven horns, and seven eyes; which are the seven spirits of God, sent out to minister on the earth. He then took

1. This book Mr. Mede calls the *codex fatidicus*—the book of the counsels of God. It is sealed with seven seals to shew that its contents are secret.

5. Christ is called the *Lion of the house of Judah*, in allusion to Jacob's prophecy. Gen. xlix. 9.

6. *Horns*, and *eyes* are the usual symbols of power, and wisdom.

the book; and as he took it, the living forms, which incircled the throne; and the elders having harps in their hands, and golden vials, full of perfumes, which are the prayers of saints, fell down before the Lamb; praising, and singing; Worthy art Thou to open the seals; for Thou hast redeemed all the nations of the earth by thy blood; and given us the blessings of thy favoured people.—This chorus was joined by myriads of angels, singing, Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive power, and honour, and glory.—And this again was joined by the whole animate creation, crying, Honour, glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth on the throne; and to the Lamb for ever and ever.—Then the four living forms, that circled the throne, cried, Amen; while the four and twenty elders fell down, and worshipped Him, that liveth for ever.

Then the Lamb opened the first seal; and one of the living forms, that circled the throne, cried with a loud voice, Come, and see. On this, I saw portrayed in the book, a white horse, and he that rode upon him, had a crown on his head, and a bow in his hand; and he went out to conquer.—He then opened the second seal; when another of the living forms that circled the throne, called to me in like manner, Come, and see. Then I saw portrayed a red horse; and he that rode him, appeared brandish-

8. The vials were a sort of censers, in allusion to the censers used in the temple-service.

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- ing a sword; and frightened peace from the earth.—
5. He then opened the third seal; and another of the living forms called to me again. I then saw on the open page a black horse; and he, who rode him had
6. a balance in his hand. And I heard a voice from the living forms around the throne, A measure of wheat for a penny—but see thou injure not the oil,
7. and the wine.—He then opened the fourth seal;
8. and I was again called, as before: when I beheld a pale horse; and he that sat on him was Death. Destruction followed hard behind; and power was given him to destroy a fourth part of the earth.—
9. The fifth seal was then opened. In that page I saw an altar portrayed, and under it the souls of those, who had suffered death in testimony to the truth;
10. and they cried, Holy Lord God, when wilt thou call us, and our enemies before thee in judgment? Then white robes were given them; and they were ordered to rest, till the number of their brethren was compleated.—After this, the sixth seal was
11. opened: and I saw the earth rent as by an earthquake. The sun was darkened; and the moon red as blood. The stars dropped from heaven, like the
- 12.
- 13.

6. *A measure of wheat for a penny.* This seems meant to describe a time of great scarcity. A penny was about 7d. of our money; and was the price of a day's labour. And the measure here spoken of, is supposed to be a slave's allowance for a day. The scarcity therefore must be great, when a man's labour could merely supply himself with food, and that only bread.—This seal seems to describe *famine*; as that before it describes *war*; and that which follows it, *pestilence*.

decayed

decayed fruit of a fig-tree. The heavens were rolled up like a scroll of parchment. The earth was rent; and all the inhabitants in dismay, hid themselves in caverns, calling to the rocks and mountains to cover them, and preserve them from the wrath of Him, that sat on the throne; and from the Lamb; the day of whose irresistible displeasure was now fully come. And as I looked, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth; and restraining the four winds, that they might not rage against it. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, with the seal of God in his hand; and he cried to the four angels; Hurt not the earth, nor any thing in it, till we have sealed the servants of God. And there were sealed a hundred and forty-four thousand from the twelve tribes of Israel; twelve thousand from each tribe. After this I saw an innumerable multitude of people gathered from all nations standing before the throne, and before the Lamb. They were cloathed in white robes, and held palm-branches in their hands; and joined in a song of praise, Salvation be ascribed to God, who sitteth upon the throne; and likewise to the Lamb. And all the company of heaven joined them, falling on their faces before the throne; and worshipping God saying, Amen! Glory, thanksgiving, and honour be ascribed to God for ever, and ever, Amen! Then one of the elders asked me, If I knew who they were, that were thus cloathed in white? I desired him to inform me. They are such, said he, as have been purified

14.

15.

16.

17.

CHAP.
VII.

1. 2.

3. 4. 5. 6. 7.
8. 9.

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14.

15. purified by affliction; and have washed their robes,
 16. and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb. Now
 17. they are advanced to the presence of God; and serve
 him day, and night; and enjoy his divine communi-
 cation. They are now removed from all their afflic-
 tions. All tears are wiped from their eyes; and
 they shall drink of the fountain of living water.—

CHAP.
 VIII.

1. 2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

After this, the seventh seal was opened: and there
 was silence in heaven for half an hour. Then seven
 angels stood before God, into whose hands were put
 seven trumpets. And I saw a golden altar standing
 before the throne; at which stood another angel,
 with a golden censer in his hand; into which he put
 incense, that he might present it on the golden altar,
 together with the prayers of the saints; which were
 carried up, in the smoke of the incense, to the
 throne of God. The angel then filled the censer
 with fire from the altar, and scattered it over the
 earth. Thunders, and lightnings followed, and a
 great earthquake. Then the seven angels, who held
 the trumpets, prepared to sound.

The first angel sounded; and a storm of hail,
 and fire, mingled with blood, fell on the earth, and
 destroyed a third part of it's fruits.—The second

1. *The silence in heaven* is an allusion to a beautiful custom in
 the Jewish worship. When the priest went into the temple to
 burn incense, all the instruments, which united in grand chorus
 before, made a solemn pause. During this interval the priest
 offered up his propitiatory devotion within the temple; while the
 people stood praying in silence without.

angel

angel sounded; and I saw a vast ball of fire, like a burning mountain, thrown into the sea; and it changed a third part of it's waters into blood; and destroyed a third part of the ships, and a third part of the inhabitants of the deep.—The third angel sounded; and I saw a flaming star, like a torch, fall on the third part of the rivers, and fountains. It poisoned all the fish; and destroyed all, who drank of the waters.—On the sounding of the fourth angel, a third part of the sun was darkened; a third of the moon, and a third of the stars. Night and day lost each a third of it's light. And I saw an angel flying through the copes of heaven, and crying three times, with a loud voice, Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the wrath, that is preparing against them!—Then the fifth trumpet sounded; and I saw an angel falling, like a bright star from heaven. In his hand he bore a key, with which he opened the bottomless pit; and the smoke burst forth, like the smoke of a furnace, and darkened the light of heaven. In the smoke ascended locusts innumerable: and as they ascended, they changed their forms, and like horses prepared for war, became covered with mail. They had human faces with dishevelled hair, and teeth like lions: they had crowns on their heads, and seemed as if they wore breast-plates of iron. They had tails like scorpions full of deadly stings. They followed a leader, the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name is Apollyon; and when they moved,

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CHAP.
IX.

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- moved, the sound of their wings was like the
 sound of chariots, or of horses rushing to battle.
 But they had power to hurt only those, who
 had not the seal of God upon them. They had not
 power to kill; but only to torment: and this power
 was limited to the space of five months. And to
 avoid the torments they inflicted, men wished for
 death; but could not find it.—After this, the
 sixth angel sounded his trumpet; and I heard a voice
 from the golden altar, that stood before the throne
 of God, crying, Loose the four angels, who are
 bound near the river Euphrates. And the angels
 were loosed; and allowed for an hour, a day, a
 month, and a year, to destroy a third part of the
 human race. And their armies were myriads of
 myriads. They wore breast-plates of fire; and rode
 on horses fierce and terrible, which breathed flame
 from their nostrils. They had tails like serpents;
 and they destroyed a third part of the human race.
 Yet still the remainder of the sons of men repented
 not of their idolatries, and their crimes.
- CHAP. X.
 1. After this an angel descended from heaven, in-
 throned in a resplendent cloud. His countenance
 shone like the sun. His feet were like pillars of fire;
 and a bright rainbow circled his head. He held a
 small open book in his hand; and set his right foot
 on the sea, and his left foot on the earth. Then he
 cried with a very loud voice; which was answered
 with thunder. I was preparing to write what I
 heard; when I was ordered to seal up what the
 thunder

thunder had spoken; and not to write it. Then the angel that stood upon the sea, and on the earth, lifting up his hand to heaven, swore by the almighty Creator of all things, that time should be no more; and that after the seventh angel had sounded, the mystery of God should be finished, as he had declared by his servants. I was then ordered to take the small book that was in the hand of the angel, and to eat it. It would be sweet, I was told, to the palate; but bitter to the stomach. I did accordingly, and felt, as had been described. Then said the angel to me, Thou must prophesy before people, and nations, and kings. A measuring-rod was also put into my hand; and the angel said, Measure the temple of God; measure the altar, and number the worshippers. But measure not the outward court: for it belongeth to the Gentiles. And they shall trample on the holy city forty and two months. And my two witnesses, cloathed in sack-cloth, shall be appointed to prophesy a thousand,

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CHAP.
XI.

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9. Alluding to Ezek. ii. 8—and iii. 33. Eating a book, in the prophetic language, signifies reading it, and meditating on it. It was *sweet* to receive a revelation from God; but as it contained his judgments against the wicked, it was attended with *bitterness*.

1. Alluding to Ezek. xl. 3.

3. There is great difficulty with regard to the two witnesses. The most probable interpretation, I think, is, that no two particular persons are signified, but all, who testified the truth, during this period: and the number too may be used in allusion to the two witnesses, which the law demanded. We observe, every where, in this book an allusion to Jewish customs.

two

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4. two hundred, and sixty days. These are the two
- olive-trees; and the two candlesticks, that stand be-
5. fore God. The fire of their mouths shall destroy
- all, who oppose them. Even he, who but desireth
6. to injure them, shall suffer. These witnesses have
- power to shut the heavens, so that no rain shall fall,
- during the prophecy. They have power to turn the
7. sea into blood, and smite the earth with plagues.
8. And when they shall have finished their testimony,
- the beast, that ascendeth from the abyfs, shall make
- war upon them; and overcome them. And their
- dead bodies shall fall in the streets of the great city,
- spiritually called Sodom, where Jesus was crucified.
9. And various people of different nations shall see their
- dead bodies three days, and an half, and shall not
10. suffer them to be buried. And the inhabitants of
- the earth shall triumph over them; and congratulate
- each other, on the death of those, who had roused
11. them from the slumber of guilt. But after three
- days, and an half, they were restored to life; and
12. great fear fell on all, who saw them. And a voice
- from heaven called to them, saying, Come up hi-
- ther; and they ascended in a cloud, as their enemies
13. stood beholding them. Then followed a dreadful
- earthquake, which overturned a tenth part of the

4. Here is a plain allusion to Zachariah's vision (iv. 3, 11, 14) — By the fire which proceeded out of the mouth of the witnesses, seems to be meant their great power in preaching the word of God.

city; and seven thousand men were destroyed. The rest were frightened into a dependence on God. The second woe is past, the third woe approacheth.— Then the seventh angel sounded his trumpet; and various voices were heard in heaven, singing aloud; The kingdoms of the earth are become the kingdoms of heaven. The Lord shall reign, and his anointed, for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, who sat before God, fell on their faces, and worshipped, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, eternal, and almighty, who now appeareth in all thy power and glory. Now shall the earth be judged; now shall the wicked be punished; and thy righteous servants be rewarded.

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CHAP.
XII.

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And I saw the temple of God; and the ark of the covenant standing in the temple: and I heard thunder, accompanied with lightning, and an earthquake, and various voices. And I saw a wonderful appearance—a woman, as it were, invested with the sun, and standing on the moon; having her head incircled by a crown, composed of twelve stars. And being with child, she cried out in travel. And I saw a fiery dragon, with seven heads, and ten horns. On each head he wore a crown; and with his tail he swept away a third part of the stars of heaven; and threw them to the ground. And he stood before the woman ready to devour the child, that should be brought forth. A male-child was born: and be-

5. Alluding to the prediction of Christ. Pl. ii. 9. Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron.

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ing destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron, it was caught up, and carried to the throne of God:
 6. while the woman fled into the wilderness, where a place of refuge was provided for her, during a thousand, two hundred, and sixty days.

7. Then followed war in heaven: Michael, and his angels fought against the fiery dragon; and prevailed
 8. over him; and his place in heaven was no longer
 9. found. The great dragon was cast out; called the devil, and Satan, who deceived the world; and his
 10. angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, crying out, Now is salvation come; the power, and authority of God, and the reign of Christ: for the accuser of the righteous before the throne of God, is now cast down.
 11. He is overcome by the blood of the Lamb; and the testimony of those, who have laid down their
 12. lives for the truth. Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and all that inhabit them. But woe to the world: for the devil is come down in great rage, knowing that his time is short.

13. Now when the dragon found that an end was put to his contention in heaven, he persecuted the woman upon earth. But the woman had wings given her; so she avoided his pursuit for a *time*, and *times*, and
 14. *half a time*. And when in his power he threw after her a violent stream of water, hoping to carry her
 15. away in the flood; the earth assisted the woman, and opening it's mouth, swallowed up the flood, before it
 16. reached the woman. Then the dragon being enraged gave up the pursuit; and made war upon the
 17. children

children of the woman; that is, upon all, who keep the commandments of God, and bear testimony to Christ.

CHAP.
XIII.

And as I stood upon the shore, I saw a beast arise out of the sea, with seven heads, and ten horns. And on each horn was a crown; and on each head some blasphemous name was written. In form he was like a leopard; but his feet were like the feet of a bear; and his mouth like that of a lion. To him the dragon gave up all his power, and authority. And as I looked, one of his heads appeared to be greatly wounded; but his wound was healed.— Then all the earth revered the beast; worshipping both him, and the dragon, from whom he received his power; saying, Who is equal to the beast? Who is able to contend with him?—And he was permitted to speak blasphemy against God; and to make war upon his saints for the space of forty years, and two months. So that all the world went after him; except those, whose names are written in the book of life by the Lamb, which was slain from the foundation of the world. And now let all men attend. A conclusion shall soon be put to this violence, and iniquity; and the faith, and patience of the saints shall finally prevail.

Then I saw another beast arise out of the earth; which had the horns of a lamb; but the violence of a dragon. He seemed, as it were, to exercise authority under the first beast; whose wound was healed; and whom he obliged all the inhabitants of the earth to worship. And he made pretences to

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14. great signs, and wonders; calling fire from heaven in
 15. the sight of men. He obliged also the inhabitants
 16. 17. of the earth to make an image of the beast; and was
 permitted to give life to it. He set it up also to be
 worshipped; and he made his worshippers to receive
 a mark on their right-hand, and on their foreheads
 —the name of the beast, and his number; without
 18. which no man was permitted to buy, or sell. It is
 a matter of wisdom and understanding to compute
 the number of the beast, and it is to be computed in
 a human manner. The number is six hundred and
 sixty-six.

CHAP.
XIV.

1.

And I beheld a Lamb standing on mount Sion;
 and around him stood one hundred and forty-four
 thousand people; all of whom had the name of God
 written on their foreheads. And I heard voices from

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18. It was common in the eastern languages to express things by enigmatical numbers. We have here a celebrated instance of this mode of expression in the *number of the beast*; which hath given occasion to a great variety of calculations, and explanations. In the Greek language this number is found in the numerical letters of the word LATEINOS; which the protestant does not scruple to affix on the Roman church; as it *latinizes* in every thing—in its prayers, bulls, decretals, and use of scripture: and the authority of Irenæus, who lived in the first century, is given for this explication; tho in fact Irenæus is not satisfied with his own explication, but mentions it only as a conjecture. Others have found the same numerical letters in other names. A late writer, finding it to his purpose to make the French king, instead of the pope, the apocalyptic beast, finds them in the word LVDOVICUS. See Vivian's Explic. of the Rev.—Others again do not look for the enigmatical number in a name; but consider it as a date; and computing from the vision, find six hundred and sixty-six years nearly about the time of investing the bishop of Rome with temporal power.

heaven

heaven loud as thunder; yet sweet as the sound of falling waters, accompanied with instruments of music. And they sang before the throne of God; but none could join them, except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who had been redeemed from the earth. These are they, who have never been seduced into idolatry; but have followed the Lamb. In them no guile hath been found: they are blameless in the sight of God.

And I saw an angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel in his hand; which was open to every nation; and he cried with a loud voice, Fear God, and glorify his name; for the time of judgment is come. Worship Him, that made heaven, and earth, and all therein.

And another angel followed, crying, Babylon the great is fallen—is fallen; because she made the nations of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornications.

And a third angel followed crying, If any one worship the beast, or receive his mark, he shall drink of the wine of God's indignation, poured without mixture from the cup of his wrath: and he shall be tormented with fire: and the smoke of his torment shall ascend for ever; and he shall neither have rest by day, nor by night.

8. Alluding to Isaiah xxi. 9.

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13. Then shall follow the happy rest of the saints;
those, who have kept the commandments of God,
13. and the faith of Christ. And I heard a voice from
heaven saying, Write, blessed are the dead, who die
in the Lord. Now, faith the Spirit, they rest
from their labours; and meet the reward of their
works.

14. And I saw an angel sitting on a white cloud,
with a golden crown on his head; and a sharp sickle
15. in his hand. And another angel came out of the
temple, crying to him, Put in thy sickle, and reap:
for the time is come—the harvest of the earth is
16. ripe.—Then he, who sat upon the cloud, put in
his sickle; and the earth was reaped.

17. And another angel, with a sickle in his hand, flew
18. from the temple, and a fourth angel that came from
the altar, called to him, and said, Put in thy sickle,
and gather the grapes of the earth; for they are
19. ripe.—And the angel put forth his sickle, and ga-
thered the grapes of the earth; and threw them into
20. the wine-press of the wrath of God: and the wine-
press was trodden; and the blood reached even to
the horses bridles, through the space of a thousand
six hundred furlongs.

CHAP.
XV.

1. 2.

And I saw another wonderful appearance in heaven
—seven angels, having the seven last plagues, which

20. This bold image seems to express great slaughter.—But
Bowyer conjectures, that instead of χαλινων, the true reading
should be χηλων; the blood came up the hoofs of the horses.

finished

finished the wrath of God on the wickedness of man.

—A vast plain was stretched before the eye, which had the appearance of molten glass; and on it were assembled all those, who had gained a victory over the beast; and had escaped the pollutions of the world. With harps in their hands, they celebrated the praises of God; and sang the song of Moses, the servant of the Lord; and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great, and glorious are thy works, O Lord almighty. Just, and true are all thy ways, O king of saints. Let the whole earth, O Lord, glorify thy name; for thou only art holy. Let all the nations of the earth glorify thee: for thy righteous judgments are manifest to all.

After this hymn of praise, the Holy of Holies was thrown open, and seven angels came out of the temple, clothed in pure white, with golden girdles around their breasts. They had in their hands seven golden vials, filled with the wrath of God. In the mean time the glory of the Lord, screened in dark clouds, took possession of the temple, so that no one could enter it, till the vials were poured out. Then I heard a voice from the temple, calling to the angels to pour out their vials.

The first angel poured out his vial over the earth; and a grievous ulcer was inflicted on all, that had the mark of the beast.—The second angel poured out his vial on the sea; and it's waters became blood; and all it's inhabitants died.—The third

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angel

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CHAP.
XVI.

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- angel poured out his vial over the rivers, and fountains; and they also became blood. And as he emptied his vial, he cried, Righteous art thou, O Lord, who hast ordered all these things in judgment.
5. They have shed the blood of thy saints; and thou
6. hast given them blood to drink. And I heard another angel cry from the altar, True and just, O
7. Lord, are all thy judgments.—The fourth angel
8. poured out his vial on the sun; and it's burning
9. heat scorched the inhabitants of the earth; and they blasphemed the name of God: but they were not
10. led by these plagues to repentance.—The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and horrible pain seized it's inhabitants; and they wreathed themselves
11. in their misery, and blasphemed God; but repented
12. not of their sins.—The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the river Euphrates: and it's waters were dried up; and a way was opened for the kings of
13. the east. And I saw seven unclean spirits, like frogs, issue from the mouth of the dragon, and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false
14. prophets. They are the spirits of demons, working lying miracles, to bring the kings of the earth together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

12. It is supposed by some interpreters, that the vials allude to the same periods, as the trumpets. On the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the angels were loosed from the Euphrates. On the pouring out of the sixth vial, the Euphrates is dried up.

Behold,

Behold, saith the Lord, I come suddenly. Blessed
 is he, that keepeth himself from the pollutions of the
 world. Then the armies of the earth were gathered
 together at Armagiddon.—The last angel poured
 out his vial into the air: and I heard a voice from
 the temple, and the throne of God, crying, It is
 finished. Then followed voices, and thunders, and
 lightnings, and a great earthquake, such as had never
 been known, since the creation of the world. And
 the great city of Babylon was rent in three parts;
 and drank fully of the cup of the wrath of God.
 The mountains disappeared from the land; and the
 islands from the sea; and hail-stones of a talent
 weight, were poured from heaven upon mankind:
 yet still their wickedness continued, and they blas-
 phemed the holy God.

Then one of the seven angels, which poured out
 the vials, said unto me, Come hither, and I will
 shew thee what judgments shall be passed on the
 great harlot, who sitteth on many waters; who hath
 committed whoredom with the kings of the earth;
 and hath intoxicated the nations with the wine of
 pollution. And he transported me in the spirit into
 the

C H A P.
 XVII.

1. 2.

3.

15. *Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.* This alludes to a Jewish custom. When the captains of the temple went their rounds at night, and found a Levite asleep on his watch, they set fire to his garment, with the torches, which they carried.

3. Whoever has seen the pope, and cardinals ride on mules, covered almost over with scarlet-cloth, cannot but be put in mind of

the wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet-coloured beast, inscribed all over with blasphemous names; having seven heads, and ten horns.
 4. She was arrayed in scarlet, and purple; and adorned with gold, and pearls, and precious stones; and held a golden cup in her hand, filled with the abomination of her corruptions.
 5. On her forehead was inscribed, *Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth*: and she was drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs.

7. I was astonished at the sight, and the angel asked me, Why I wondered? I will explain to thee, said he, the mystery of the woman; and of the beast, that carries her, which hath seven heads, and ten horns.
 8. The beast thou sawest, was; and is not. It ascended from the bottomless pit; and shall descend into it again: and the inhabitants of the earth, whose names are not written in the book of life, shall gaze after it, and wonder.—But now attend to the real meaning. The seven heads are seven mountains; on which the woman sitteth. There are also
 9. seven
 10. seven

of the woman riding on a scarlet-coloured beast.—Not that I suppose the prophet alludes to so trifling a circumstance; in which there is in fact no immorality: yet the thing is singular.

10. *They are seven kings. Five are fallen.* These five species of government, which are fallen, are supposed to be *kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs*, and *military tribunes*. How far interpreters may be right in this solution, is not easy to say: certain however it is, that both Livy, and Tacitus enumerate the different modes of Roman government, that prevailed before the emperors, exactly in this manner.—*Romani sub regibus primum, consulibus deinde,*

seven governments. Five are abolished—one is—
 another is not yet come; and when it cometh, it
 shall continue but a short time. The beast is the 11.
 eighth; and yet he was also one of the seven; and
 shall go into perdition. And the ten horns, which 12.
 thou sawest, are ten kings. They have received no
 kingdom as yet; but receive the power of kings,
 one hour, with the beast. They have all but one
 mind; and shall unite in strengthening the beast,
 making war upon the Lamb.—But the Lamb 13. 14.
 shall overcome them: his power is above all; and
 his followers are chosen and faithful. The waters, 15.
 which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are
 people, and nations: and the ten horns of the beast 16.
 shall attack the whore, and destroy her. For God 17.
 hath put into their hearts to fulfil his will; so they
 shall strengthen the beast, only till the time, which
 God hath appointed. The woman, which thou sawest, 18.
 represents that great city, which reigneth over the
 kings of the earth.

After this, I saw another angel come down from
 heaven with great power. The whole earth was
 enlightened with the splendor of his presence. And
 he cried with a loud voice, Babylon the great is

C H A P.
 XVIII.

1. 2. 3.

deinde, ac dictatoribus, decemvirisque, ac tribunis consularibus
 gessere. Liv. VI. 1.—Urbem Romam a principio reges ha-
 buere. Libertatem, et consulatum L. Brutus instituit. Dicta-
 turæ ad tempus fumebantur; neque decemviralis potestas ultra
 biennium; nec tribunorum militum consulare jus diu valuit.
 Tac. An. lib. I.

fallen—

fallen—is fallen. She who had power to intoxicate the nations of the earth—to draw kings into whoredom—and to enrich the world with her merchandize—is now become the companion of devils, and the habitation of impurity.

4. And I heard another voice from heaven, crying, Come out of her, my people; and be not partakers of her sins, that you may not suffer through her crimes. For her sins have reached unto heaven; 5. and have now called down justice from the throne of God. Now she feels the retribution of all her crimes. 6. The cup, that she mixed for others, is returned doubly drugged to her own lips. Her anguish, and distress now equal her pride, and luxury: and she who 7. said in her heart, I sit as a queen; I shall see no sorrow; hath, in one short day, experienced an accumulation of every evil. 8.

9. Then shall the kings of the earth, who wantoned with her in dalliance, bemoan her fate; when standing 10. afar off, they shall see the smoke ascend from the fire that consumes her. Alas! alas! they cry, thou great city, in how short a moment is thy destruction compleated!—Then also shall the merchants 11. 12. 13. of the earth wail over her, crying, Who shall now 14. 15. purchase her rich metals, her precious spices, and her costly vestments. Alas! alas! She who was cloathed 16. in purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, is now in a moment stripped of all her gorgeous array; and all her wealth laid waste.—Then shall the seamen, 17. 18. 19. and all, who traffic in ships, when they see afar off the

the smoke ascending from her destruction, lament over her. Alas! alas! that great city, which once employed so many ships, is now in one moment become desolate†.—But, O ye heavens, rejoice—ye holy apostles, and prophets—God hath revenged your cause.

20.

Then I saw a mighty angel raise a mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus shall the great city of Babylon sink; and her name shall be no more remembered. The voice of music, and dancing shall no more resound within thy walls.—The light of the candle shall disappear—and the rejoicing of the marriage-feast no more be heard. The artist shall no more display his curious works; nor the foreign merchant his rich stores. The sound of industry, and labour shall cease in thy street. The forceries, by which thou hast deluded the nations, shall now be abolished; and the blood of the saints and prophets, who have been slain within thy walls, now call for vengeance.

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C H A P.
XIX.

1.

After these things, I heard a loud voice in heaven crying, Hallelujah!—Salvation, honour, glory, and power be ascribed to God! True, and just are all thy judgments. Thou hast judged the great corrupter of the earth; and hast avenged the blood of thy servants upon their wicked persecutor; whose smoke ascendeth for ever, and ever.—Then all

2. 3.

4.

† These lamentations over Babylon seem to be copied from the 26th and 27th chapters of Ezekiel.

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the host of heaven fell down before God; and united in one voice of praise, Hallelujah!

5. 6. After a solemn pause, the voice of praise again began. It was loud, as distant thunder; yet sweet as the fall of waters: Hallelujah—Hallelujah, the Lord Almighty reigneth. Praise him all his servants.—Now exalt, and glorify his name: for the marriage of the Lamb approacheth. His bride is ready: She is arrayed in pure white. Pure white expresses the righteousness of the saints.

7. Then an angel said to me, These are the words of God: write the happiness of them, who are invited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.—Then
8. I fell at the feet of the angel to worship him, not knowing who he was. But he rebuked me, saying; Worship me not: I am thy fellow-servant; and equally with thee bear testimony to Jesus. Worship God alone. Thy labours in the gospel, and the Spirit of prophecy, unite together in bearing testimony to Jesus.

9. After this I saw a glorious figure mounted on a white horse. Faithfulness, and truth went before him; and in righteousness he went to war with the
10. remnant of his enemies. His eyes shone like flames of fire; and on his head he wore many crowns. His
11. vesture was dipped in blood. His name no man knew; but he was called the *Word of God*. And the
12. 13. armies of heaven followed him, riding on white horses; and cloathed in pure linen. Out of his
14. mouth issued a sharp sword; with which he fought
15. the

the battles of the Lord. He smote the nations, and ruled them with a rod of iron: he trod the wine-press of the wrath of God. On his vesture was written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried with a loud voice to all the birds of prey, that flew under the copes of heaven; Gather yourselves together to the banquet of the Lord. Ye shall eat the flesh of kings, and mighty men; and devour the carcases of all their mighty hosts.—And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, with their armies, gathered, to make war on him, that rode on the white horse. And the beast was taken; and the false prophets who had deceived with lying wonders; and they were thrown alive into the lake of fire. The rest were slain with the sword of him, who rode upon the white horse.—And I saw an angel descend from heaven with the key of the bottomless pit in one hand; and a massy chain in the other. And he seized the dragon, the old serpent, the devil; and bound him in the bottomless pit; and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, during the space of a thousand years; that he may deceive

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CHAP.
XX.

1. 2.

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18. This noble image was probably taken from Ezekiel (xxxix. 17). *Thus saith the Lord, speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field; Assemble yourselves together, and come; gather yourselves, on every side, to my sacrifice—that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood; even the flesh of the mighty; and the blood of the princes of the earth.*

the

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the nations no more, till that period end; and then he shall be loosed again for a little time.

4. Then I saw thrones placed, and judges sitting on them in judgment: and I saw the souls of them, who had suffered for the testimony of Jesus: they were appointed to reign with him a thousand years.
5. But the rest of the dead were not raised, till after the thousand years were expired. This is the first resurrection; and happy are they, who have a part
6. in it. On them the second death hath no power: but they shall be priests with God, and Christ;
7. and reign with him a thousand years. At the end of
8. that time shall Satan be loosed again; and go forth to deceive the nations, from one end of the earth to the other. And Gog and Magog shall lead forth the armies of darkness, whose number is as the sand
9. of the sea. And they overspread the face of the earth; and compassed round the camp of the saints, and the holy city. Then fire came down from God,
10. and destroyed them. And the devil was cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophets were thrown; and there he was tormented for ever.

11. Then I saw a large, white throne, and an awful figure sat upon it, from whose face the earth, and

8. Gog, and Magog seem to allude to Ezekiel in the 38th, and 39th chapters.

the heavens fled. And the dead stood before God, and the books were opened. And the dead were judged from the books, according to their works. The sea gave up her dead; and death, and the grave resigned all they had subdued; and all were judged according to their works. Then death, and the grave were cast into the lake.—This is the second death: and whoever were found, whose names were not written in the book of life, were cast into the lake of fire.

12.

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14.

15.

CHAP.
XXI.

1.

Then I saw a new heaven, and a new earth; for the sea, and all the substance of the old world, had passed away. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending from heaven, prepared as a bride to meet her husband. Then a voice from heaven proclaimed; Behold, the tabernacle of God is now with man. God himself will dwell on earth; he will be their God, and they shall be his people. He will wipe away tears from their eyes. Sorrow, and pain, and death, and every evil thing are now passed away. Then he, that sat on the throne, said; Behold I will make all things new. Write these things. All is finished. I am the first, and the last. From henceforth I give freely to the thirsty soul of the fountain of life: and thus will I be a father to him, who hath overcome the temptations of the world; and he shall be a son to me; while the wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

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9. Then one of the angels, who had the seven vials,
 10. said to me, Come up hither, and I will shew thee
 the bride of the Lamb.—As he said this, he car-
 11. ried me to a lofty mountain, and shewed me the
 great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending from hea-
 12. 13. ven in the glory of God. The light, which spread
 around it, was like the sparkling lustre of a gem.
 Its walls were lofty, having twelve gates; at each
 of which sat an angel. Over it's gates, which were
 14. three on every side of the four walls of the city,
 were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of
 15. Israel: the wall had twelve foundations; on which
 were inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of
 the Lamb.—Then the angel, who spoke to me,
 having a golden reed in his hand, measured the city,
 16. 17. and it's walls. The city was square; and measured
 twelve thousand furlongs on the several sides of the
 wall; which were one hundred and forty-four cubits
 18. high, according to the measure of a man. The
 walls were of jasper; and the buildings of the city
 had the appearance of gold, but transparent like
 19. 20. chrystal. The walls were founded on precious stones
 of various kinds, twelve in number. The gates
 21. were of pearl; and the streets, like the buildings,
 22. of transparent gold.—But I saw no temple. The
 presence of God, and of the Lamb, was the only
 23. temple. Nor was there any sun, or moon. The
 24. glory of the Lord was it's only light. In this glo-
 rious light shall all nations walk, which inherit the
 25. salvation of God. It's gates shall never be shut.

Hither

Hither shall be brought whatever is great and glorious upon earth. No pollution shall be found in it. They only shall enter, whose names are written in the book of life.

26.

27.

CHAP.
XXII.

1. 2.

Then the angel shewed me a pure river, clear as crystal, issuing from the throne, and running through the midst of the city; on the banks of which stood the tree of life; which bore fruit every month; and always of a different kind. The leaves of the tree were health to the nations. No curse can enter here. The throne of God secures it; where all his servants worship him in peace. They shall always stand before him; and his name shall be on their foreheads. They have no occasion for the sun, nor any other light; the Lord himself giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever.

3.

4.

5.

Then the angel declared the truth of all I had seen; assuring me, that the same Lord, who had inspired the holy prophets, had sent him to give me this revelation of his will. All these things, he told me, should speedily come to pass; and happy should they be, who paid a due attention to them.

6.

7.

Then I fell down at the feet of the angel, who shewed me these things. But he rebuked me, saying; Forbear: I am thy fellow-servant only; and one of the prophets, thy brethren, who obey the commandments of God. Him only shalt thou worship.—Then the angel said; Seal not up the prophecies of this book. The time approaches: yet let men have opportunity: let them either continue in

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9.

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11.

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in their sins, if they are obstinate; or, if they are well-disposed, let them have the means of leading holy, and godly lives.

Behold, I come quickly, saith the Lord; and bring my reward with me; and shall recompence every man, according to his work. I am the Beginning, and the End: the First, and the Last.

Happy are they, who obey my commandments; and gain access to the tree of life. They shall enter the gates of the city; from which all wickedness shall be excluded.

Thus (said Jesus to me in his own person) I have sent my messenger to testify all these things to the churches. I am the root, and the branch of David—the morning star: and let all my holy servants wish for my coming; and desire to drink of the fountain of everlasting life.

Let no one alter the things contained in this book. If any one add to it, God will lay the plagues contained in it on him. Or if any one diminish from it, God will take from him his part in the book of life; and in the blessings contained in it. The completion of *all* approaches.

Amen! blessed Jesus, come as thou hast promised!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!

18. These words are so apposite a conclusion to the whole *New Testament*; that some interpreters believe John meant it as such. It is certainly an apposite conclusion; but I find no ground for such an interpretation.

END OF THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS the following discourse, tho written on a different occasion, seems no improper appendage to an Exposition of the New Testament, I shall make no apology for adding it as a conclusion to the whole.

ADVERTISEMENT.

MATTHEW 22

As the following is a notice, the writer on a different
occasion, has no opportunity of referring to the
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perhaps in general, the Notice of the Notice of the
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MATTHEW xiii. 31.

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed; which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest of herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come, and lodge in the branches thereof.

THIS short parable, and one or two others of the same texture, were intended to hold out the progressive state of the gospel. But interpreters, perhaps, in general, confine the meaning of these parabolic exhibitions within too narrow a period. They commonly consider them as exhibiting the propagation of Christianity from the commencement of our blessed Saviour's ministry, till the time when Christianity shall obtain a footing over the earth. This period, no doubt, the parable before us includes; but, I think, it may reasonably be supposed also to include a more comprehensive one. It may begin earlier; and be extended farther. It may take in, I presume, the whole history of the bible; and connect the book of Genesis, with the Revelation of St. John.—I shall endeavour therefore, in the following discourse, to explain it under this comprehensive idea.

Without any harsh interpretation, I think, what the text calls the *kingdom of heaven*, or the œconomy of the gospel, may be divided into four great periods—it's *prophetic*—it's *persecuted*—it's *established*—and it's *triumphant* state. We denominate each period from the *general cast* of the external circumstances, in which it is engaged; tho these circumstances may blend together, (as they often certainly do) in different periods. In the mean time, real Christianity is, in all periods, we know, the same.

The *prophetic* state of the gospel commences at the fall of man. The grain of mustard-seed was then sown. The intimation of God's gracious design to recover man from the mischief of that sad event, was at first like the *least of all seeds*. An obscure prophetic hint was the only hope, on which the old world depended; aided by the mysterious rite of sacrifice; to which God never would have *had respect**, nor have distinguished it's modes, if it had not been of his own appointment.

After the destruction of the old world, God separated to himself a particular family, as an instrument to prepare mankind for the reception of the gospel. In the œconomy of this family, which soon increased into a great nation, was displayed the most wonderful series of divine contrivance, in that system of types, (historical, and ceremonial,) which were afterwards *realized* in gospel-times. In the whole history of the world we have nothing similar to this *sacred machinery*, if we may so speak. We trace the resemblance of it in no single analogy through the whole scheme of God's moral government.

* See Gen. iv. 4; and a note on Heb. xi. 4.

This shews it, I think,—not a work in the common course of nature; but a miraculous interposition of Providence, contrived for some peculiar purpose.

Strange, no doubt, and whimsical many of these rites, and ceremonies appeared to those, who viewed them superficially. But as the great scheme of the gospel-dispensation began to open, and they were observed so connected with it in every part, the resemblance could not but have a great effect both on the pious Jew, and on the reasoning Gentile; and contributed greatly, no doubt, among other things, to bring over those large bodies of converts, of whom we read, on the first opening of Christianity.

After the *prophetic* state of the gospel we arrive at it's *persecuted* one. We still characterize each period, as I observed, by it's *predominant feature*.—In the fulness of time our blessed Lord appeared on earth.—From the grand, and pompous display of types, and prophetic notices through so long a period, and dispersed by means of the Jewish œconomy and literature, through so many countries, not only the Jew himself, but many of the heathen also expected a prince of such power and greatness, as the world had never seen. The splendid court, the arrayed battalions, the triumphal chariot, the extended empire, were all to be the accompaniments of this potent monarch.

But it immediately appeared, that the *kingdom of heaven* disclaimed all connection with the pomp, and grandeur of the world. It was denominated the *kingdom of heaven* in very opposition to the *kingdoms of the world*.—This however was an indignity, and disappointment, which the world could not bear. It's pride, it's interest, and

every thing it valued, were offended. If Christianity opposed the world, the world immediately set itself to oppose Christianity. Persecution began. The blessed Jesus was the first victim. The disciple could not expect better treatment, than his Lord. A succeeding generation arose. Christianity still disclaimed all commerce with the guilty world; and the guilty world in return still shewed that it had yet the pre-eminence. *The kings and rulers of the earth stood up, and took counsel against the Lord, and against his anointed.*

As Christianity extended, the sphere of persecution was enlarged. It was not now carried on in the sparing, and cautious manner of the first persecutors; when a wicked prince killed James, the brother of John, with the sword; and because he saw it pleased the people, proceeded to take Peter also. But whole bodies of men were now dragged to death—not only to death; but to extreme torture. A Christian and a martyr were in those days equivalent expressions.

In the mean time religion throve, and flourished under all this violence. Then were displayed the Christian Graces in all their purity and beauty.—Faith, and Hope, and Charity appeared with all their heavenly train of virtues—piety—humility—meekness—and perseverance in duty.—Then were good offices returned for cruelty, and malice. Then was an indifference to the world in every shape discovered—it's allurements, and it's menaces were equally despised. None became Christians but from principle, and the hopes of religion shewed themselves superior to the severest trials.—The excellence of Christianity in the end prevailed. It overbore all opposition; and the rulers of the earth at length embraced, and took it under their protection. It became

became *establisbed*, and *endowed*. This brings us to the *third* period of the gospel.

We should naturally suppose, that the Christian church, now relieved from all it's difficulties, would have united in one song of praise, and thanksgiving; and that it's several members would have shewn their gratitude to God by the sanctity of their lives. But it is not common with mankind, to be grateful to God, in proportion to his benefits. It is much more common to turn his blessings into wantonness. Thus it fared with Christianity. Being reconciled with the world, it immediately contracted an intimate friendship with it.—In some places, it was introduced to all the heathen superstitions, the Gothic ignorance, the barbarous, and immoral rites, and customs, which prevailed: and with too many of them it closed.—In other places, strange interpretations of scripture were taken up; monstrous heresies arose; and Christians quarrelled among each other with the bitterest enmity, and on the most trifling grounds.—As mankind grew more enlightened, Christianity made an acquaintance with philosophy. Philosophy threw new lights on the old system of religion. The great truths of the gospel became offensive to the improved reason of man. Though Christianity was formerly at perfect variance with the wisdom of the world, the wisdom of the world became now the criterion of a divine revelation. Men were not now to be imposed on like their simple forefathers. They were too wise to believe any thing, which they could not clearly explain. Tho the *works of nature* often puzzled them; they would allow no difficulties in *God's moral government*.

As it fared thus with the *doctrines* of the gospel, so it did with it's *precepts*. In early days it was said, that *he who was the friend of the world, was the enemy of God*. But this wholesome caution was soon forgotten. The wit of man was employed to make up a kind of fashionable religion. All the arts of reasoning were used to reconcile religion with expedience; and to explain with nicety, how God, and mammon might be served together. Indeed the connection became so close between Christianity and the world,—the precepts of the former so modelled by the maxims of the latter, that it was not easy to distinguish and separate the several interests of these two intimate friends. It was *real* Christianity no longer; *nominal* Christianity answered all the ends, that were desired.—In those mighty plans of ambition, in which the world formerly engaged alone, Christianity now united. Sometimes it raised a spiritual tyranny, domineering over the consciences of men; and calling *fire from heaven*, in opposition to every gentle precept of the gospel.—Sometimes again thirsting after temporal dominion, it would lay waste whole countries by fire and sword.—In private life, whatever schemes of dissipation, and pleasure were going forward, tho' wholly opposite to the principles and simplicity of the gospel, Christianity was always ready to make one: modish fashions were every where adopted, instead of Christian virtues; and the fear of God gave way to the fear of the world. The gospel might talk, as it pleased, of the *narrow way to life*, and the *broad way to destruction*. That road which all people took, must be right; and the shameless pastors of the church often led the way.—In projects of trade also, to whatever length pursued; however made the vehicles of luxury, and vice; to whatever objects extended, even the
most

most inhuman, and unnatural; in whatever wickedness involved, frauds, perjuries, breach of trust—it was all alike, Christianity never objected—never refused it's warmest consent.—Then again with regard to that great worldly code, the point of honour, Christianity at once entered into the spirit of it; and easily saw how very superior it was to the gentleness of gospel-precepts; and how much more effectual, than the best of them in the preservation of decorum among mankind. The text might cry, *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.* These were precepts fit only for apostles and primitive-christians. Modern Christianity throws all these obsolete precepts behind; and armed with vengeance, perhaps even for an indiscrete word, will rush with stopped ears to the murder of a friend.

Not but there are in this age, we doubt not, and have been in all ages, many who govern their actions by the sincere principles of the gospel; and would lay down their lives, if called on, in it's defence, with the firmness of martyrs. God has never left himself without these faithful witnesses.—In some countries also the truth of Christianity, no doubt, is more generally felt than in others. The fashions of the day are less adverse to it. But it must still be remembered, we characterize times by their leading features—of ours, I trust, the features are not here overcharged.

How long it may please the Almighty, that this more corrupt state of our religion shall exist, we know not. We hold an opinion however, founded on prophecy, that in some future period, after Christianity hath spread itself
over

over this earth, it will exchange it's corrupt state for a *triumphant* one. We found our belief principally on the Revelation of St. John. This divine book, (authenticated beyond cavil*) holds out an amazing display of wonderful events—grand, and sublime in the highest degree; but soaring beyond the capacity of man. The *seals*, the *trumpets*, and the *vials* have all been explained by various interpreters; and in various ways: but I doubt whether in any way, that is fully satisfactory. All interpreters make them hold out the state of the church: but in their details they often lead us among the trivial events of civil history; which in many instances seem but little connected with the affairs of Christianity.

Indistinct however as these sublime, prophetic images may be; we are authorized at least to gather from them these truths—that after some great revolutions, and fearful events; some trying, and purifying conflicts, which the church of Christ may have yet to undergo (tho of what nature, or through what agency, we pretend not to explain) it will receive a form intirely different from that, in which it had ever before appeared. All prophecies, yet unfulfilled, will now be compleat. It will no longer be the *persecuted* church, it once was. It will no longer be the *corrupt* church it now is: but all offence of every kind being done away, the wickedness of the world, which hitherto had the upper hand, will be subdued under the excellence of Christian virtues. Then all that glory, and all that happiness will take place, which we may conceive, when the principles of the Christian religion shall be divested of all worldly prejudices, all

* See the preface to the Revelations.

mischievous projects, and all wicked connections—when the whole Christian world shall be united in one great family, and join in praise to God, and universal benevolence to man.

We enter not into the niceties of this question, nor pretend to explain who are to be partakers of the *first*, and who, of the *second resurrection*: nor to decypher any of those wondrous images, which carry the imagination into vast, unknown, and boundless regions. We go no farther, than we seem fully authorized by the text; and tho not so far as the interpretation of some learned men have led us; yet at least as far as that point, in which all learned men seem to agree.

Here then we see the grand scheme of Christianity complete; of which the bible from one end to the other, is the great record. It opens with the origin of the gospel in the fall of man; and leading us through the Jewish history, as the vehicle of all those prophetic intimations, preparatory to Christianity, makes it's first great pause at the opening of the New Testament. There the prophecies of the old being realized, we are informed the gospel soon began to spread in the world; and as soon to suffer a state of *persecution*. For it's full *establishment*, and wealthy endowment in a future period, we look into prophane history; and we want no evidence but what our own times can furnish, of the *great corruption*, into which it has fallen in these declining ages. Our holy record however leaves us not comfortless; but holds out to us still one period more, it's *triumphant* state; in which all it's difficulties being removed, it will assume it's native glory.

I shall

I shall conclude with a few remarks on the principal uses, which seem to arise from this extended view of the Christian religion.

In the first place, we have an answer to the objector's question, Why did Christianity appear so late in the world?—How does he know, that it is late? The world, for any thing he knows, may yet be in it's infancy. Christianity, we are assured, has many a hard conflict to pass through, before it arrive at that state, which itself is said to last a *thousand years**; and under that prophetic term perhaps a much longer period. Christianity hath not yet overspread the face of the earth; which we believe from prophecy it must do, before it arrive at it's triumphant state. We have seen it, in our day, making large strides in the east, and in the west. But tho much is done, yet more remains undone. Half the world is yet in darkness, and ignorance. As learning and the arts of civilization spread, the light of the gospel, we doubt not, will spread with them†. It matters not what instruments God employs: he can work with those, which seem the most unlikely to forward his designs. The soldier with his sword, the merchant with his cargo, and the settler with his plough, all unite in promoting the schemes of God.

Besides, the objector should be aware, that some *preparation* to introduce the Christian religion, was necessary. If Christianity had been introduced *earlier*, the grand proof from prophecy would have been in propor-

* See Rev. xx. 4.

† See a note on Romans x. 14.

tion weaker.—It might be necessary also to shew mankind from the miserable efforts of their own reason, how much a *heavenly instructor* was wanted*—and from the ravages of sin, how much they stood in need of a *Saviour*. This too required time to effect. The ravages of sin, no doubt, still continue. But it's empire, on the whole, is much repressed: and as to individuals, Christianity hath shewn such numerous, and illustrious instances of shining characters, as never appeared under any other influence.—In the mean time, with regard to the salvation of mankind, we have the best scriptural authority, that all men, who lived up to the lights they had received, both before Christ, and after him, are saved through his merits. He is styled the *lamb slain from the foundation of the world*.

The *consolation* which this extended view of Christianity hath diffused, through all ages of the church, and may still diffuse, should be considered as another great use arising from it. While the grain of mustard-seed had yet spread little above the ground, the expectations of patriarchs, and holy Jews were awakened. They saw the glorious prospect far off; and waited with holy hope for the *consolation of Israel*.

The same idea animated the Christian in later periods of the church. It seems indeed to be often touched on by St. John in the Revelations; and is perhaps the best key to open, at least the *general intention*, of that mysterious book.—In the persecuted period of the church,

* See the preface, page vi.

when all around was black, and gloomy—when the sword was unsheathed, the fire kindled, and every engine at work to extirpate the gospel; the expiring martyr, with an eye of despondency, might have foreseen nothing but ruin to the cause, in which he suffered, had he not been cheered by a prophetic ray animating his breast with an assurance, that he was a holy victim offered up in defence of that religion, which was protected by the hand of heaven; and should exist to the end of time—and that the same good Providence, which protected it, would protect also his faithful servants, who died in it's defence.

Again, the pious Christian, in these corrupt times of the church, when he sees dissipation, and wickedness overbearing all things like a flood; and every appearance as if real Christianity were about to leave the land—when his spirit sinks within him at the dismal view—he is consoled by looking into future times, and there in the visions of prophecy, seeing the holy religion he professes, reviving with ten-fold brightness; and triumphing at length over all the impurities of the world.

Another use arising from this extended view of Christianity, is giving courage, firmness, and modest dignity to all the true professors of the gospel. They are the means under Christ to keep alive the holy flame of religion in this corrupt state of things. They are, as their Saviour tells them, the *salt of the earth*, to preserve it from corruption; and may humbly consider themselves as carrying on the great scheme of redemption in union with Christ.

We trace an analogy through all God's works. As each individual undergoes a state of trial; so, it seems,
does

does the church of Christ as a general body. In early times it underwent the trial of persecution; in these times it undergoes the harder trial of prosperity. Both, no doubt, are necessary to prepare it for the last great change, which awaits it. The Jewish religion, imperfect as it was, prepared the world for Christianity; and Christianity, in it's present state, however defective, is a preparation, no doubt, for it's future period.——As then the holy confessors, and martyrs of ancient times were the means of preserving the spirit of religion alive under all it's fiery trials; so are the pious professors of the gospel in these days of languor, and indulgence.

Let them then consider with proper humility the situation, in which they stand. Let them consider that it is not less, but even more dangerous than that of the ancient Christians; inasmuch as the insidious friendship of the world is more dangerous to religion, than it's open violence. Instead of joining therefore in the corruptions around them, or even by an incorrect behaviour breaking down the fences of religion; let it's pious professors, especially it's appointed ministers, stand up boldly in it's defence. Let them consider the world, as their greatest enemy. Let them keep it, as it were, at arm's length; and not suffer it to close in upon them. Thus by their firmness, and example may they shew themselves to be humble instruments in the hands of God, both of lessening the corruptions of the present times; and of preparing, and leading forward Christianity to those wonderful events of it's last great period.

Lastly, from the several periods of the gospel taken together in one view, we draw a strong argument for
it's

it's truth. Let us see how the comparison stands with any human institution. We select one of the most extraordinary. When an enterprising chief, at the head of a body of armed men, introduces a new religion, we confess it to be a very surprizing event; as nothing is more difficult, than to eradicate religious prejudices. Yet still we can account for this revolution on human principles. The subtle impostor, with great sagacity, adapting his plan to the circumstances of the times, told his followers, that the Jewish religion had been good at first; but on it's becoming corrupt, it had been superseded by Christianity—that Christianity also had been good at first; but as it was now become corrupt, he had been sent from God to reform it. Such reasoning, in an age, and in a country, where real religion was almost extinct (as we know it was, at that time, in the east) was specious. With equal subtilty he strengthened his plan by retaining so much of the old religion, as to make people believe they rather received an improvement of what they had before, than an institution wholly new. In this too he plausibly mimicked the process of Christianity from Judaism. At the same time, instead of the spiritual rewards of the gospel, for which his corrupt disciples had little relish, he promised a future state replete with the highest degree of indulgence, and sensuality, which was so agreeable to their manners: while fire and sword were threatened to those who opposed him—engines more terrifying, than the distant penalties of the gospel.—Tho the revolution therefore introduced by this impostor, was a wonderful combination of art, and force; and produced a singular phenomenon in the history of mankind; yet still it presents

sents nothing, but what may well be accounted for on human principles.

But when we see a religion introduced with all that striking apparatus of prophecies, and prophetic types—commencing at the beginning of the world, and not brought to perfection perhaps, till the conclusion of it—successfully opposing, tho violently persecuted, all the powers of the earth—and at length overturning every thing, that stood in it's way, without worldly threat, or allurements of any kind; but merely by it's divine power, and the mild, yet forcible persuasives of it's own purity, and excellence—when we see it afterwards assailed by the flattery, and corruptions of the world; and tho in many circumstances overpowered, yet in many instances rising superior to this trial also—when, instead of losing ground by these different attacks, we see it prevailing, more and more, in various parts of the world to this very day—and finally, when we have assurances from prophecy (with which the course of it's progress hitherto is perfectly analogous) that it will in the end prevail over the wickedness of the world, and display itself universally in it's native colours—when we find such a combination of circumstances all centring in one point, it is impossible to attribute so gradual, so compleat, so wonderful a plan to any human means. The grandeur of the whole, and the amazing coherency of the several parts, are similar only to the great works of creation, and we cannot but acknowledge in them, the hand of God.

T H E E N D.

ERRATA, AND ADDENDA.

ERRATA VOL. I.

Page.

- 11 in the middle of the note for *gives*, read *give*.
 - 21 for *forgivenesses*, read *forgiveness*.
 - 30 dele the two first lines in note v. 6.
 - 124 for *Elias*, read *Elijah*.
 - 153 for *the pharisaical traditions*, read *pharisaical traditions*.
 - 163 for *an enmity*, read *any enmity*.
 - 261 for *rich of worldly*, read *rich in worldly*.
 - 302 in note 38, after *we know were*, insert, See 2 Cor. xi. 26.
 - 369 for *he meant*, read *he meant it*.
 - 380 in note 12 for *disciple*, read *disciples*.
 - 397 for *jealous in temper*, read *jealous in his temper*.
-

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- 114 in note 4 for *St. Paul's epistle*, read *St. Paul's epistles*.
- 250 in note 15 for *seems to*, read *seem to*.
- 320 for *resume an argument*, read *resume my argument*.
- 447 for *the interpretation of*, read *the interpretations of*.

ADDENDA VOL. I.

THE following note may be added on Matt. vi. 13.—As the article *re* is added to *malice*, it rather denotes *the evil one*, than simply *evil*, as it stands in our translation. The antithesis also requires this sense. *Deliver us from the evil one*—that is, *from his dominion*; for *thine is the kingdom*. But our translators seem to have been misled by the vulgate.

Note on Matt. vi. 33.—All these things shall be *added*. The mode of expression here leads us to consider the things of this world as thrown in, by way of *overplus* in a greater bargain; rather than as being of much value in themselves. And this is indeed the light, in which we should learn to consider them.

Note on Matt. vii. 7.—*Ask, seek, knock*. From these words, which form a climax, we receive the same instruction to persevere in prayer, which we do in the case of the widow, and the unjust judge, Luke xviii. 7.

Note on Mark ix. 49.—The difficulty of the two concluding verses of this chapter, arises from a vivacity of imagination in the pursuit, and application of metaphors; a faculty, in which the orientals excelled, and delighted. They pass suddenly from one idea to another, nearly, and sometimes remotely allied to it. They relinquish the primary sense for another suggested by it; and without giving any notice, as we do, of our intention. These numerous *reflected lights*, as we may call them, eagerly caught at by the mind, in its train of thinking, perplex the attention of a modern reader, and must be carefully separated by him, if he would see the whole scope, and purpose of many passages in the sacred writings.
Bishop HURD's Sermons.

Note on John ii. 54.—Jesus walked *no more*. *Ετι* rather signifies *not yet*, than *no more*. And indeed the sense requires it; for Jesus did afterwards walk openly.

ADDENDA VOL. II.

IN the preface to the Romans page 5, near the end, correct the reading thus. From the same discourses mistakes again have arisen with regard to faith, and works. St. Paul chiefly addresses his argument to the Jews, who conceived the Mosaic ceremonies, or the works of the law, to be necessary to salvation. It is most probable therefore, when he speaks of justification by faith, &c.

2 Tim. i. 6. The original *αναζωπυειν* is very strong, signifying to blow up, to kindle.

At the end of the note, page 304, after the words, A TOTAL CHANGE ENSUED, add the following. The example of the learned Mr. John Hales of Eton, recorded by Lord Clarendon, should never be forgotten. "He had, whether from his natural temper, and constitution, or from his long retirement from all crouds, or from his profound judgment, and discerning spirit, contracted some opinions, which were *not received*, nor by him *published*, except in private discourses; and then rather upon occasion of dispute, than of positive opinion: and he would often say, his opinions, he was sure, did him no harm; but he was far from being confident, that they might not *do others harm*, who entertained them, and might entertain *other results* from them, than he did; and therefore he was *very reserved in communicating what he thought himself in those points*, in which he differed from what *was received*."

See Lord Clarendon's Life, v. I. p. 53.

James v. 16.—The text does not so immediately lead us to make confession to the elders of the church, as to direct a kind of spiritual intercourse of confession, and prayer among private Christians. Both kinds of confession may be highly useful on many occasions: but neither affords a sufficient foundation for the extent, to which the Romanists carry auricular confession.

Page 441. *After the paragraph ending with the words, FIRST OPENING OF CHRISTIANITY, add the following paragraph.*

Among this people too were laid up those wonderful records of verbal prophecy, which giving language, as it were, to the mute signs of typical representation, led the devout inquirer still more directly to the acknowledgment of those divine truths he sought for.

